Men of the Old Testament

Leon K. Willman

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MEN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

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BY

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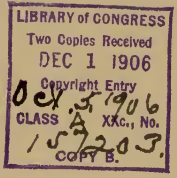

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Introduction

This little series of Studies is "made to order." It was put together at the request of the Bible Study Department of the International Committee. It is the product of experience in the teaching of Bible History as required work to boys in preparatory school. Its sources are the Old Testament, illuminated by such popular works on Old Testament history as those of Oort, Kent, Sanders, Ottley, Wade, Cornill, Fry, Koenig, Farrar, Dods, G. A. Smith, and others. Indebtedness is gratefully acknowledged to Mrs. John Meigs, of The Hill School, for selections from the utterances of modern religious teachers.

One who undertakes to teach Hebrew history to young people has, at the outset, the task of gathering his own material. The Old Testament is not a text-book of history. One is confronted at every turn by problems of date, authorship, didactic purpose, parallel and composite accounts. The teacher will find himself dividing his material, perforce, into about three classes: knotty questions that he straightens out and lays aside; material that he teaches; vexing problems that clothe his mind like sackcloth. Only the things in the second class mean anything to his students, and only these things are to be taught,—but taught with enthusiasm, in enforced oblivion of non-essentials and unsolved difficulties.

In the following series of Studies, an attempt is made to frame what may be called, to use a figure from music, a melody of Hebrew and Jewish religious history, unaccompanied by the discord of negative critical discussion or the harmonies of contemporary history. Simply the main track of historic movement from Abraham to Christ has been sought out. If the progress is clearly traced; if the mind and heart of God are better understood in this shaping of the people of Canaan; if those martyr-geniuses, the prophets, stand out in nobler lines; if the unseen Christ lays His hand on the shoulder of the reader as he bends over these Studies, then this little book may prove to have been "made to order" in the very highest sense of the phrase.

L. K. W.

"Sincerity in the Teaching of Bible History to Children"

(An extract from the Introduction to "Bible History," by Pastor Koenig, friend and co-worker of Pastor Charles Wagner, author of "The Simple Life.")

Thanks to the indefatigable labors of unselfish and heroic scholars; thanks to the toil of generations of critics, who have studied this book, the Bible, as no other book has ever been studied, we have arrived at a really historical conception of the Old Testament, and are able to see the history of the Israelites unroll before us in a clear and rational manner. Out of the nebulosity of their origins emerges, little by little, a people from whose heart spring extraordinary men, the prophets. The whole history of Israel converges around them; they are the flower of the Hebrew people, its soul, its heart, not to be dismissed in a line or two, as too often they have been in sacred histories of the past. God seems to have stooped to the level of man, and to have disclosed Himself, "unmasked" Himself, little by little.

By an irreproachable method these modern scholars have given us, not a *new* conception of Sacred History—for there was no historical conception of the history of Israel before, only the traditions of the ages,—but *the* historical conception of the Old Testament. To-day, our faith in Christ, the Saviour, is rooted in such ground, our position is so unassailable, that we have nothing more to fear from the attacks to which the Bible was open when considered as a book fallen from the sky.

It is not from curiosity that we study the history of the Hebrew religion, as we might study the religion of the ancient Peruvians. We believe that God revealed Himself especially to this peculiar people, that they were commissioned to teach the world that the *summum bonum* lies in a conscience transformed by the most intense and vital religious sentiments. This truth is Israel's gift to the world, and it is her glory that she prepared the way for the coming of Christ Jesus.

The sacred history of Israel is nothing else than the gradual preparation for the preaching of the kingdom of God; it is in this light that we should teach Old Testament history to our children.

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Directions and Suggestions

TO THE STUDENT

1. The Studies that follow are planned for daily use, to cover a period of eighteen weeks.
2. The best quarter-hour of each day should be set aside for this work. Begin and end the period with prayer that God shall show you the truth, and open your mind and heart to receive it.
3. Go at each day's reading with a will. Expect to put real mental effort into it. Neither waste time, nor hurry. Keep in mind the title of the Study, and glance back over a page or two.
4. When you read your Bible mark the passages that impress you. If you use ink, you might take one color for important historical or biographical statements, and another color to underline devotional sentences that you like.
5. It is of the utmost practical importance that you memorize the names of the books of the Old Testament in their order. This is absolutely essential. The Bible is your tool, and you must learn how to use it at the start. The following arrangement, used as a sing-song, may be a help in fixing the order of the books in the memory:—

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
Joshua, Judges, Ruth
1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles
Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah
Jonah, Micah, Nahum
Habakkuk, Zephaniah
Haggai, Zechariah
Malachi

Here they are, roughly classified:—

5 books of The Law	Total, 39 books
12 of History	
5 of Poetry	
5 of Greater Prophets	
12 of Minor Prophets	

Indicate the groups on the margin above, besides the names of the books.

DIVISION I

The Fathers.—Studies I and II

Study I.—The Patriarchs: Abraham

Study I.—The Patriarchs: Abraham: Ancestor of the Hebrews and First Worshipper of Jehovah

First Day: Abraham's Call and Emigration

Along the Euphrates River are found to-day mounds which contain the ruins of ancient cities. Among them, one has been partly uncovered, about two hundred miles from the Persian Gulf, which is believed to mark the site of the ancient city of Ur of Chaldea. Its excavated ruins tell an interesting story of the religion of the inhabitants. They had in the temples images representing their gods. It is also known that they had, in connection with the worship of these, many wicked practices.

We can imagine that a man's best nature would revolt against the things which the Chaldeans did in the name of religion. A man would dread the prospect of bringing up his children in such surroundings. So Terah, the father of Abraham, must have felt. Terah emigrated from Chaldea and journeyed seven hundred miles or more up the Euphrates. After Terah's death, Abraham became the head of the household. In clearer terms than his father had heard, he, in turn, received a "call" from Jehovah to go out from Haran into a place that should be shown to him. He went "under sealed orders."

Abraham's Call and Emigration, Gen. 12:1-5

1. In what sense did Jehovah "say" anything to Abraham?
2. In what direction did they go? What was the mode of traveling?
3. This man received new light, broke old and dear ties, left an assured prosperity, and went out from all that was familiar, obedient to—what? whom?
4. Did Abraham consult his friends? Explain his course of action to his neighbors? Invite his friends to go with him?
5. Would they call him wise or foolish?

So to us comes a call. The Christian life opens up at the start a purpose in the world. To keep that purpose clear, sacrifices will sometimes be necessary. We cannot listen to every call and be true to the one Call.

Study I.—The Patriarchs: Abraham

Second Day: Abraham's Journey

We saw Abraham's caravan moving southward under sealed orders. With the same heroic faith with which the Pilgrims "launched their Mayflower and steered boldly through the desperate winter sea," did this man of faith steer his "ships of the desert" toward an unknown land, to be consecrated by him to a free and pure worship. He probably went down the eastern side of the Valley of Jordan. Half way between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea he would observe on the opposite side the entrance to a rich, green valley. At this point he would ford the Jordan and first set foot in Canaan.

Progress Marked by Altars, Gen. 12:5-10

1. Of the four places mentioned, locate three on the map.
2. What is meant by "the South"? What are the physical characteristics of that section?
3. In what sense did Jehovah "appear" to Abraham?
4. Do you find any mention of inhabitants in this land?
5. Note the religious act that marked his first and his second encamping.

Definiteness in religious worship is made vivid here. Let us, too, have our altar-places, with a time set apart daily for definite, even vocal, conversation with God. "Chinese" Gordon, on his Egyptian campaign, for one hour daily had his tent-flap closed while he talked with God. We should pray while about our work, and also pray before our work begins.

Study I.—The Patriarchs: Abraham

Third Day: Abraham and Lot

According to the chronicler, the patriarch spent some time in Egypt; the pyramids had then been standing possibly a thousand years. When pasturage in Canaan was again assured, he and his nephew returned. His home, after the division of the pasture lands, was fixed in the plain where Hebron was built in later times. In the fourteenth chapter of Genesis is given an account full of interest, though obscure, showing Abraham in a new rôle, as a fighting man. The features are: an Elamite empire, probably universal at the time of Abraham's emigration; the revolt of the little tributary kingdoms in Canaan; a great Elamite invasion to enforce the tribute; the reconquest, and the carrying off of Lot. Abraham comes to the rescue with a little force of about a thousand men. There is a midnight surprise and rout of the Elamite forces, and the triumphant return with Lot and the spoils.

The Division of Pasture Lands, Gen. 13:1-12

1. What was the cause of the famine?
2. Abraham's wealth (13:2) is fitly summed up in the description of a rich Oriental found in Job 1:3.
3. We are not certain whether "the plain" was at the north or the south end of the Dead Sea. Read 13:3, 10, and consult the map.

Why should not Abraham be generous when he trusted so perfectly in Jehovah? Why should he not give Lot his choice? Jehovah took care of him. So with the man of faith in every age. He is generous, and rises above the common run of men who seek nothing but their own advantage. He is rich in contentment, cheerfulness, quickness of sympathy, love;—a rich inner life. Those who are so rich cannot be mean (see Matt. 5:42).—*Hooykaas.*

Study I.—The Patriarchs: Abraham

Fourth Day: The Friend of God

Three great religions have sprung from the worship by Abraham of one holy God. With him began true religion, in the fact that he first talked with Jehovah as friend with friend. They made a covenant or agreement. Jehovah made promises to him concerning his family and his new home-land. Abraham's part was to follow Jehovah's wishes and keep himself and his family separate and clean from the polluting practices of the Canaanites, who combined worship with wickedness.

Friend of God, Gen. 15:1, 5-7; 17:1-4, 9-11

1. What are the two main divisions of the Bible? Put the word Covenant in the place of Testament. If the old Covenant was made with Abraham and his people, with whom is the new Covenant made? Is it out of date (Heb. 10:16)?

"The Bible connects with the name of Abraham the beginning of that life of friendship and communion between God and man in which true religion essentially consists."

In Jewish history, the great temple of Solomon, of marble and gold, was built to enclose the holy Ark of the Covenant. In our Christian times "know we not that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit which is in us? We are not our own, for we are bought with a price; let us glorify God, therefore, in our bodies."

What must we do in order to be friends of God (John 15:14)?

Study I.—The Patriarchs: Abraham

Fifth Day: Father of a People

The worship of one holy God is now followed by the adherents of Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. How was it handed down? Abraham was not a missionary, and he did no writing. The connecting link between him and us is his family, and the Hebrew nation which grew from that family. The spiritual truths learned by this hero of faith were not to be lost. Jehovah's promise was fulfilled, to the great joy of Abraham and his wife Sarah, when their son was born. They gave him the name Isaac. When he became a youth there came to Abraham one of the sorest tests of his life.

Abraham's Faith Tested, Gen. 22:1-13

"Among the Canaanites the sacrifice of children was an ancient and holy institution."

The voice in Abraham's heart urging him to offer his son did not shock and horrify him as it would us, because he was acquainted with the practice. The question in his heart would be: "Is their fear of their gods greater than my love for my God?"

It never occurs to us that God can ask such a sacrifice of us. Yet the same disposition inspires every true believer still. Thus, if in times of persecution a man urges his own son to endure death rather than be faithless to the truth, he offers his child as a sacrifice to the God of truth. If a father urges his son to risk his life to save a neighbor, while his heart bleeds at the thought of his boy's suffering and being taken away from him, he is offering him to God, who gave His only Son that we might not die but live.—*Hooykaas.*

Study I.—The Patriarchs: Abraham

Sixth Day: Provision for the Future: Centers of Tribal Life

We have found Abraham a man of faith, an emigrant, the master of a great household, and something of a fighting man upon occasion. Moreover, he provided for the good of his descendants, who believed with gratitude that they had the very wells that he dug, and trees that he planted (Gen. 21:27-33). To the desert-dwellers nearby, Palestine has always been "a land flowing with milk and honey," but in reality water has to be hoarded in underground cisterns, while wells are of priceless value—the centers of tribal life for centuries. Further, when came the sad event of Sarah's death, Abraham bought a family burial-place. The Turks to-day keep jealous guard over a sepulcher at Hebron which is very ancient, and which may indeed contain the very dust of patriarchs.

Purchase of a Burial Place, Gen., chapter 23

1. Here is a story that sounds as though it had been written on the spot by an ancient newspaper correspondent. Mark its most vivid features.
2. The patriarch was never willing to be in debt to strangers (verses 9, 13; also see Gen. 14:22-24).

Not only is property bequeathed, but also the influence of character.

Once only in the vast cycle of time,
Shall I move 'mid these scenes so cherished;
But the deeds that I do, or poor, or sublime,
Shall stand till the world hath perished.

Shall stand! And faces I never shall see,
And lives that I cannot guess,
Shall be faithful, or false, because of me—
Shall curse the world, or bless.

—*Selected.*

Study I.—The Patriarchs: Abraham

Seventh Day: Provision for the Future: A Wife Chosen for Isaac

When Abraham's life was drawing to a close he desired to see Isaac married. The choosing of a wife was a matter of importance to Abraham, because he must be true to his pledge to Jehovah, and keep his family separate from the Canaanites. In the story of Eliezer's errand is given the account of the betrothal of Rebekah to Isaac. The other incidents recorded of the life of Isaac are of little interest or value. He seems a colorless individual, peace-loving and virtuous in a negative way.

Faithful Eliezer's Errand, Gen. 24:1-4, 10-34, 40, 49-67

1. What was Eliezer's position in Abraham's household (Gen. 15:2)?
2. Is such work as that described in verses 18-20 properly woman's work?
3. Describe the picture in verses 63-66.

One of the "fruits of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22) is fidelity.

Thou hast not asked me, Lord,
To first of all love Thee,
But simply to believe the Word
That tells Thy love to me.

Thou dost not bid me feel
An ardent love for Thee,
And fear affection is not real
That does not burn in me.

But Thou hast said, "My friend
Is he who keeps My Word."
This I can do, even to the end—
I can be faithful, Lord.

—*Maltbie D. Babcock.*

Study II.—The Patriarchs: Jacob and Joseph

Study II.—The Patriarchs: Jacob, the Typical Hebrew; Joseph, the Favorite of Jehovah

First Day: Jacob's Successes at Home

In the Oriental household over which Rebekah presided there was not always peace and harmony. She was a strong-minded and ambitious woman, and had her own way with Isaac. Thus she made opportunities for pushing forward her favorite son, Jacob. More than once she aided him in outwitting his elder brother, Esau. One such incident is given below; another is recorded in Gen., chapter 27. By such means Jacob gained the patriarchal leadership.

The Birthright for a Dinner, Gen. 25:27-34

1. Contrast Jacob and Esau; what kind of life did each prefer? Which was the stronger physically? Which was the stronger mentally?
2. Could a man be a good hunter who reasoned as Esau did (30)?
3. What do you consider the best and what the worst quality in each man?
4. What was the "mess of pottage"? What was the "birthright"?

The exact opposite of the vice of self-seeking is the grace of sharing.

Ask Him to increase your powers of sympathy. Then practice. Opportunities are lost for want of thought. Share with one who has fewer pleasures than you some little comfort or enjoyment that you have learned to look upon as a necessary of life.—*Wilkinson.*

Study II.—The Patriarchs: Jacob and Joseph

Second Day: Jacob's Successes Abroad

After having been cheated twice, Esau was so angry that he threatened to kill his brother. Rebekah was alarmed. She decided to send Jacob away. However, to her husband she did not mention her fears, but asked him to send Jacob to Haran to get a wife from among her relatives. Isaac readily consented, true to the family covenant. So, while perhaps Esau was away on a hunting trip, Jacob was sent away. "Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the children of the East."

Jacob's First Night Away from Home, Gen. 28:10-22

1. Describe the vision of Jacob as he started out in life for himself.
2. What was the covenant which he made with God?
3. Does Jacob's proposition sound like a business bargain?

The familiar hymn which was McKinley's favorite is based on this incident:—

Though like a wanderer,
The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
My rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee!

Your good things it seems as if you took directly from the hands of God. His hands touched your hands as He gave them to you. Let them be symbols to you of your loyalty to the highest authority. Let them make your life strong and gentle by keeping it in God's presence.—*Brooks.*

Study II.—The Patriarchs: Jacob and Joseph

Third Day: The Return of Jacob

In Mesopotamia the young man found the choice of his heart in Rachel, daughter of Laban. But he had to marry her elder sister before he might have her, and Laban's price was many years of hard service. Craft and patience and industry went hand in hand to carve this typical Hebrew's success. At the end of thrice seven years he finds himself master of a great household. With a caravan consisting of family, servants, baggage, flocks and herds, he makes his way back to Canaan. Arrived on the borders of Esau's domain, news comes that Esau is approaching with a large force of men. Is he coming for revenge? Will Jacob's trickery save him now? Jacob spends the night alone. It is a second spiritual crisis in his life. We may believe that he then abandoned his crafty policies. His name henceforth is called "Israel," or Prince, because he won the thing he prayed for (Gen. 32:24-30).

The Meeting of Jacob and Esau, Gen., chapter 33

1. What was the object of the arrangement (1, 2)?
2. Had Esau kept his anger hot for twenty-one years (4)?
3. Jacob had gained the birthright and blessing which would have made him the superior of his brother. Does he claim it now? What title does he give Esau? How often does he use it? What does Esau call Jacob?
4. Does Jacob melt at Esau's generosity, and trust him entirely (12-17; the first "he," verse 12, refers to Esau)?

Love God with all your soul and strength,
With all your heart and mind;
And love your neighbor as yourself,
Be faithful, just and kind.

Deal with another as you'd have
Another deal with you;
What you're unwilling to receive,
Be sure you never do.

—*Watts.*

Study II.—The Patriarchs: Jacob and Joseph

Fourth Day: Joseph, His Father's Favorite

In Canaan, the prosperous patriarch lived in Shechem, then in Bethel, and later in Hebron. Esau lived in Edom. Of Jacob's twelve sons, ten, in our next view of the family, were men grown. Joseph and Benjamin were boys. These youngest were Jacob's favorites, being sons of his beloved Rachel. He so indulged and petted Joseph that the boy was very disagreeable to his brothers, and was on the way to become detestably conceited.

The Favorite Son, Gen. 37:2-4, 12-28

1. Did the boy spy and tell tales (2, 14)?
2. Was the coat a working-garment (3)?
3. What feelings did his brothers have for him (4, 8, 11)?
4. Locate Dothan and Gilead. Were the men in sight of the old caravan road to Egypt?
5. How is Joseph a type of the petted boy?

It is quite the custom to sing the praises of the poor boy who rises by his own exertions to a strong and useful life. He deserves praise. Yet think of the stimulus he has for exertion! But the son of rich and indulgent parents, who shakes off the soft chains of luxury and makes his life hard with self-denying toil, so that he grows up to spend himself in the service of God and men—is not he worthy of even higher praise?

Read how John Ruskin gave himself with his million dollars for the good of Englishmen.

Study II.—The Patriarchs: Jacob and Joseph

Fifth Day: Joseph, the Slave, Made Viceroy

The mill of events grinds on. The brothers, rough men, had their opportunity to get even. They did so in a barbarous fashion. Arrived in Egypt, Joseph serves the captain of the life-guards, but is not yet out of hardships. With truly noble principle and strong self-control, he keeps himself from evil, and in direct consequence is imprisoned. Accepting his unjust sentence cheerfully, he serves the jailer and the king's butler so well that he gets an opportunity to serve the king. He interprets a dream that predicts a world-wide famine, and then gives some practical advice which Pharaoh takes kindly.

Joseph Graduated from the School of Hardship, Gen. 41:33-36, 38-49

1. What kind of man would Joseph have become under his father's petting?
2. How does he endure hardships and injustice? In this, how nearly does he follow the rules given in 1 Peter 2:19-24 and 2 Timothy 2:3?

We want to grow strong. Under wrongs and injustice, when we are "not treated right," the opportunity is given us. But if we whine or strike back, how then?

"Sometimes you will be neglected, and your vanity may feel wounded. Never let this annoy you; be absolutely sure that in due time all will come right, and you will have all the consideration which you merit."

Study II.—The Patriarchs: Jacob and Joseph

Sixth Day: The Visit of Jacob's Sons

Joseph proved an able viceroy. The common people seem to have made no provision against the famine. Joseph had to feed them, and he did so—for a price. Before the period was over, his royal master owned all Egypt. Canaan, too, was stricken by famine. When Jacob's sons came to Egypt for grain, Joseph might easily have ordered their death. He did not do so, but did give them a great fright in his efforts to get possession of his beloved brother Benjamin.

Joseph Face to Face with His Brothers, Gen. 42:1-6, 13-17; 44:18-34

1. How did Joseph frighten them? Was it right to do so?
2. Judah's plea (44:18-34) is one of the gems of literature. Note how short are the words, and how simple the style.
3. A while ago we saw Jacob face to face with the man he had wronged; how is this a similar situation?

When a man does wrong he cannot leave it behind him by running away. These men had to face their crime after many years.

> When we in our viciousness grow hard—
> O misery on't—the wise gods seal our eyes;
> In our own filth drop our clear judgments; make us
> Adore our errors; laugh at us, while we strut
> To our confusion.
>
> —*Shakespeare.*

Study II.—The Patriarchs: Jacob and Joseph

Seventh Day: Settlement of the Hebrews in Egypt

Learning that his father was still alive, Joseph thought better of his first intention to keep Benjamin alone, and sent for the entire family to come down to Egypt and live under his care. With Pharaoh's full permission they were settled on the Egyptian frontier, on the east side of the Nile Delta, the black-soil country, where there was rich grazing for their flocks and herds. When Jacob died, his remains were embalmed and, with great ceremony, carried to Canaan for burial. The traditions about Abraham and his descendants were handed down from father to son, and in later times were put into writing.

The New Home of the Family, Gen. 46:1, 6; 47:1-6, 27

1. This is the beginning of the "Sojourn in Egypt" which was destined to last for many years.
2. What spirit does Joseph show concerning the wrongs which he had received (45:4, 5, 7, 8)? Does this accord with the rule Christ has given us (Matt. 6:14, 15)?
3. Is his conclusion at this point correct, that God so rules that everything is sure to come right in the end?

"All things work together for good to them that love God." "The Moslems have a beautiful expression which they use in common conversation, 'I take refuge with God!' That is a Christian's privilege with regard to everything that oppresses his life within and without. 'I take refuge with God' from sins, when in temptation, when in the midst of life's petty vexations."

DIVISION II

The Founders.—Studies III and IV

Study III.—Israel Delivered and Organized

Study III.—Israel Delivered and Organized

First Day: The Oppression

In the land of Goshen, on the northeast frontier of Egypt, the descendants of Jacob grew from a family to a group of tribes. Joseph, the viceroy, was dead. The Pharaoh who was their patron died also. In the course of the succession to the throne there came a ruler who watched their growing wealth and numbers with alarm. How easily they might turn the tide against him if they joined with invading enemies from the northeast! In the fear of such a possibility, he began a policy of oppression. The Hebrews were taken from their shepherd pursuits and made to serve as slaves on public works. Among other things, they built the store-cities, Pithom and Rameses. He also ordered that male infants should be killed. It is believed that the Pharaoh of the oppression was Rameses II, a noted conqueror, called Sesostris by the Greeks, who lived about the thirteenth century B.C.

The Birth of the Nation-Builder, Ex. 2:1-10

1. Here again (4, 7-9), as in the case of Jacob, Jewish craft is shown; but is it here a sign of selfishness?
2. From verse 10 and from your knowledge of ancient Egyptian life, what can you imagine as to the boy's surroundings and education?
3. Which influence was stronger in Moses' education, that of his mother-nurse, or that of the royal court?

How many of us arose this morning with the deliberate purpose of brightening life for others to-day? Is any day well spent that leaves that out? The world needs sunshine-givers more than it needs statesmen or inventors, or so-called great folk in any field.—*C. G. Trumbull.*

Study III.—Israel Delivered and Organized

Second Day: Moses in Exile

When Moses grew up, in spite of his princely rearing, he found his sympathies strongly drawn toward the people of his own blood. Time and again, with a swelling heart, he watched them toil and fall under the whips of their taskmasters. One day, in a passion of sympathy and anger, he did a deed of violence. In consequence of the deed the next period of his life was spent in Midian. While there he married. One day there came to him the vision of the flaming bush. He had ripened for his life-work. He must reveal Jehovah to the Hebrews as their God, and demand from Pharaoh their freedom in the name of Jehovah. For this task he was given wonderful powers, and the help of his brother Aaron as his spokesman.

Moses' Deed of Violence, Ex. 2:11-15

1. If you had been in this young man's place would you not have preferred to stay away from these harrowing scenes?
2. Do you think Moses did wrong?

Though we cannot commend Moses for the murder he committed, yet the feelings that inspired him at that moment do deserve the highest praise. Honor to the man who takes the part of the weak—who risks his own interests for those of his neighbor—who "endures as seeing the Invisible." While he loses earthly reward he gains a glory greater than the treasure of Egypt.—*Hooykaas.*

Study III.—Israel Delivered and Organized

Third Day: The Demand for Release

In the meantime, Meneptah succeeded Rameses II on the throne. The brothers, Moses and Aaron, came to the elders of the Hebrews and explained their mission from Jehovah, and showed their power by "signs." The people received them well. The brothers then brought to Pharaoh the request for deliverance. He treated it with disdain (Ex. 5:2). "Who was this unheard-of Jehovah—a petty god of slaves—that a king of Egypt should care about his worship!" In anger, Pharaoh called them an idle people, and ordered their burdens increased. The Hebrew overseers were held accountable for the same amount of work under the harder conditions. When they could not produce it, and were beaten, they appealed to Pharaoh.

The Pain of Ingratitude, Ex. 5:14-23

1. Why did the overseers appeal to Pharaoh?
2. Why was straw used in brick-making?
3. See the pitiful condition of mind of these slaves (6:9).
4. Moses was taking upon himself one of the heaviest burdens that a man is ever called by God to carry—to serve men and be unappreciated by them, misunderstood, even blamed. This Jesus spoke of as "bearing the cross." But Moses was "called," and only such calling enables men to bear the cross.

"Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude."

Do you know the meaning of this "calling" and this "strife"? Many men never understand it. Sorrow is in the world, but they feel no impulse to relieve it. Sin spreads havoc around them, but they are fired by no indignation. But if you truly know and honor God, there is a work set apart for you individually—a work in delivering the wretched and fighting against every kind of misery—in which you must defy the wicked world as fearlessly as Moses faced Pharaoh. When such a noble task invites, and we hesitate because of the sacrifices, blessed are we if the "thou must" of God is victor over the "I dare not" of fear and sloth.—*Hooykaas.*

Study III.—Israel Delivered and Organized

Fourth Day: The Plagues and the Release

Matters seemed to be going worse instead of better. Moses prayed to Jehovah about them. Soon devastating plagues came upon the Egyptians which did not touch the Hebrews (9:24-26). Hence they were believed to have come because of the anger of the Hebrews' Jehovah (9:27, 28, 33). With each plague Pharaoh promised to grant part of the request. But Moses demanded absolute release. The last punishment was fearful; the eldest child in each family and the firstborn of all cattle died in one night (12:29, 30). Then Pharaoh, in terror of Jehovah, urged the Hebrews to leave the country. In that night of deliverance the national freedom of Israel was begun.

Sin, Penitence, Sin, Ex. 9:25-28, 33-35

1. What different motives may men have for serving God?
2. Pharaoh was cruel, was punished, repented, and made promises to be merciful; the punishment was remitted. What did he do then?

"O Lord, we have misjudged Thee quite,
Found only weakness in Thy word,
Forgot the path our Master trod,
Heard not His call to glorious fight,
His call for men.

"Repentance and submission give,
But heart of steel let us not lack,
And, shrinking, walk the craven's track.
May we, each day Thou giv'st to live,
Quit us like men.

"Grant us Thy spirit, strong and keen.
May we no favor show to shame;
No silence, weakness, soft and tame,
Where rugged conflict should have been.
May we be men."

Study III.—Israel Delivered and Organized

Fifth Day: The Going-Out

In that night of deliverance the national freedom of Israel was begun. The Passover was adopted as an annual feast to celebrate the deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 12:17). It means to the Jews of to-day what our Fourth of July means to us, but it is saturated with a strongly religious spirit. (Historically, it might be more exact to parallel the Exodus with the sailing of the Pilgrim Fathers.)

They went out in haste, not an army—for they had no arms nor discipline—but a horde of slaves, with women and children, baggage, flocks and herds. Their only dignity or hope lay with their leaders, Moses and Aaron, and, back of them, in Jehovah. Then came the final act in the self-destructive wilfulness of Pharaoh. As his fleeing slaves were marching southward, between the steep hills on the west and a shallow arm of the sea on the east, he went after them with a force of chariots (14:9). The fugitives crossed the sea—the waters being driven back by the strong wind—and the Egyptians, following, were overwhelmed by the returning waters.

Moses' Song, Ex. 15:1-18

1. Where in this song do you find Jehovah spoken of as though He were a Man (4, 12, etc.)?
2. Where is the idea presented that Jehovah is the God of Israel only?
3. Be sure you catch the tone of ringing triumph (1, 2).
4. This event, the crossing of the Red Sea, was more marked in all Israel's later history than is the Signing of the Declaration of Independence with us. It stirred religious emotions no less than patriotic. In fact, religion and patriotism were interwoven in the Hebrew heart. Is God's hand in our history as clearly as in that of the Hebrews?

Lord of the nations of the world,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done!
In peace be all earth's banners furled,
In token of Thy Son:
To Thee we pray, O draw Thou near!
Hear us, Almighty Father, hear!

—*F. D. Sherman.*

Study III.—Israel Delivered and Organized

Sixth Day: The Journey to Sinai-Horeb

Moses led the great crowd along the coast of the Gulf of Suez, southeastward. His goal was the wild, mountainous district in the southern angle of the peninsula. On the journey the people had their first experience, though by no means their last, of hunger and thirst. They found a food in the wilderness which they called "manna" (16:15). They also had a taste of war, we are told, repulsing an attack of the Amalekites. A visit of congratulation was received from Jethro; and here we seem to observe the beginnings of civil government among the Hebrews. "This Jethro, a priest in Sinai, had no small share in Moses' work" (*Cornill*).

Self-Government Begun, Ex. 18:13-24

1. How was Jethro related to Moses?
2. Tell in your own words the features of the system here instituted.
3. This arrangement made Moses more free for higher duties; how did it also serve to train the people for self-government?
4. Did they even know how to obey?
5. What important feature of republican government is here begun?

Attend to the duties and obey the laws of the university. It requires neither brains nor courage to break the laws, and often comes of a desire to get cheap notoriety through cowardice or vice. Thieves and burglars break laws; true men keep them; they are made for good.—*Pierrepont.*

Study III.—Israel Delivered and Organized

Seventh Day: Receiving the Law at Mount Sinai

Here is Moses facing the tremendous task of shaping this horde of escaped slaves into a nation. They were encamped on a plain in the lonely mountains, close to a peak called Sinai, and remained there somewhat less than a year. During that time Moses frequently ascended the mountain alone. We are told that, after periods of solitary communion with God, he brought to the people the law written on tablets of stone. He caused the people to make a covenant with God-Jehovah, agreeing to keep this law (19:7, 8). The final form which these laws took is found in the Hebrew Book of the Covenant, in Exodus, chapters 20-23 and 34. While Moses was absent on the mountain the people behaved very badly.

The Feast of the Golden Calf, Ex. 32:1-6, 15-20, 30-35

1. If the Christian's moral life is below the standard of the Ten Commandments, is his Christianity up to par (Matt. 5:17, 18)?
2. What were the "tables" (32:15)?
3. Did Aaron take the blame upon himself?
4. See the bitter ingratitude in the rude words of verse 23.
5. See how nobly Moses identifies himself with his people in verse 32. He is carrying their sins on his heart. It is his "cross"; he cannot throw it off.

My brethren, live nobly in these noble times! It matters little whether your activity be great or small. Everywhere there is a good, there is a bad. God save us from the bad! God help us to the good, and give us all the right to say humbly at the last that which His Son, our Saviour, said, "I have glorified thee on the earth!"—*Brooks.*

Study IV.—A Generation of Discipline

Study IV.—A Generation of Discipline

First Day: On the March from Sinai

Upon leaving the region of Mount Sinai, the Hebrews marched out into the desert to the north. Their next great headquarters was Kadesh Barnea, a place of springs and good grazing, about a fortnight's journey from Sinai, and fifty miles south of the Dead Sea. The journey was marked by some suffering and a great deal of complaint (Num. 11:4-6). When they marched, the Holy Ark of the Covenant, which held the stone tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments, was carried before them (Num. 10:33). By this and other means they were constantly reminded that

> "Jehovah is the God of Israel;
> Israel is the people of Jehovah."

Moses used a portable Tent of Meeting as the place for consulting Jehovah's will.

The Tent of Meeting, Ex. 33:7-17

1. What are the mutual relations of the three mentioned in verse 11?
2. What is the double prayer of Moses (13-16)?
3. Where do Joshua's duties lie mainly? Does it not seem a narrow life?
4. Two facts about Joshua are noteworthy: he filled a place of minor duties; he was much in the society of a great man.

As to the first:—

Many a Christian feels the irksomeness of the duties of life, and feels his spirit revolting from them. To get up every morning with the firm resolve to find pleasure in these duties, and do them well, and finish the work which God has given us to do—that is the part of Christ's follower. The humblest occupation has in it materials of discipline for the highest heaven.—*Robertson.*

As to the second:—

Associate as much as possible with persons of true worth and nobility of character. The main use of a great man is to inspire others. Get close to men of energy, and see how they work—to men of thought, and catch their spirit and method; get near the refined and cultivated in mind and manners, and feel their charm.—*Munger.*

Study IV.—A Generation of Discipline

Second Day: Spying out Canaan

The continued slavish quality of the horde taxed Moses' patience (Num. 11:14). The notion came to him that he might abandon them and substitute his own descendants as the chosen people (Num. 14:12; compare Ex. 32:10). But he nobly put aside the suggestion, and continued his mission. A group of seventy elders was appointed to assist him (Num. 11:16, 17). On one occasion the people complained about the manna, and wanted meat. A flock of quails was driven into camp by the wind. The people gorged themselves so that they died by thousands (Num. 11:33).

Arrived at Kadesh Barnea, they planned to enter Canaan, the "Land of Promise," and sent twelve spies into the country to find out its resources and its defences.

The Report of the Spies, Num. 13:25-28, 32, 33; 14:1-10

1. Orientals act out their emotions vividly. Read this passage and picture its dramatic features.
2. What two things had the spies been instructed to report upon (13:19)?
3. What was their report under these two heads?
4. Under which head did the majority and minority reports differ (14:7-9)?
5. Remember the names of the two spies who brought a sturdy minority report.
6. Listen to the contemptible wail in 14:2, 3.

The two conflicting reports of the spies are the two voices that speak to any man when he faces great and righteous undertakings. One can undertake great things when depending upon God.

Speer tells the story of a man who once tried to dissuade a Swede from going out as a missionary to India, and he urged on him that it was very hot there, that the temperature went even as high as one hundred and twenty-five degrees in the shade. "Vell," replied the Swede, indignantly, "ve don't have to stay in the shade, do ve?"

Study IV.—A Generation of Discipline

Third Day: Flinching at the Crisis

The cowardly panic of the host proved their unfitness for an invasion. Hence, Moses announced that Jehovah would not lead them into Canaan until every grown man of them—every man who had known slavery—should have died in the wilderness. With characteristic impulsiveness, the people then rushed to attack the Canaanites, repenting of their cowardice; but Moses did not give his help, and they were repulsed (Num. 14:44, 45).

For thirty-eight years Moses made Kadesh Barnea the headquarters of the tribes. Here were copious springs. Out from this common center they wandered with their flocks for pasturage. To it they resorted for judgment, for social life, and worship.

The Penalty of Distrust, Num. 14:11-19, 26-31

1. The words of Jehovah in 14:12b seem to present the opportunity of a lifetime to Moses. What is it?
2. Give in your own words his argument in reply.
3. How is the judgment of Jehovah in 29-31 simply the demand of common sense? Picture that horde trying to conquer anything!

The bigger the work, the greater the joy in doing it. The wholehearted striving and wrestling with difficulty, the laying hold with firm grip and level head and calm resolution of the monster, and tugging and toiling and wrestling at it, to-day, to-morrow, and the next day, until it is done—it is the soldier's creed of forward, ever forward; it is the man's creed that for this task he has been born.—*Stanley.*

Study IV.—A Generation of Discipline

Fourth Day: The Wandering

The period was one of national discipline. Though rebellion was directed against Moses, and even his sister Miriam disputed his authority (Num. 12:1), the great leader's power was unshaken. Miriam died while at Kadesh, and Aaron at Mount Hor. When finally Moses gave the word to advance, it was a new and hardier race that obeyed him, used to desert privations, bound together by a new feeling of race ties, confident in Jehovah's might, loyal to their statesman-leader. The route east of the Dead Sea was chosen. A message was sent ahead to secure the right of way through Edom.

The Advance Obstructed, Num. 20:14-21

1. Does the request seem reasonable?
2. What good reason might the Edomites have had for their answer?
3. What unworthy motive may they have had?
4. The Edomites and the Israelites were cousin-peoples. Name the two brothers from whom they descended.

Let us pledge ourselves to unceasing war against jealousy in every shape—jealousy of another's success, or possessions, or place, or popularity. It is a common delusion that another's success dims ours, that another's failure enlarges our success by contrast. Do not believe it!

Study IV.—A Generation of Discipline

Fifth Day: Conquest of the Amorites

The churlishness of their cousins, the Edomites, put the Hebrews to the necessity of a long march southward again. Their hearts nearly failed from weariness and discouragement (Num. 21:4). But they pressed on, and passed through Moab to the river Arnon, the border between the Moabites and the Amorites. When they asked permission of the Amorites to pass they were roughly attacked (21:23). The outcome was that the Hebrews conquered all the land east of Jordan, from the river Jabbok to the Arnon. It is also said that they conquered Bashan, north of the Jabbok. These military successes alarmed the King of Moab, and, fearing to use force, he sent for a noted diviner, named Balaam, to come and cast a "spell" on the Hebrews.

Balaam's Curse, Num. 22:1, 4b-7; 24:10-13

1. To "curse" means here to cast a spell, and so to render helpless.
2. Just what was the idea in the mind of Balak, King of Moab (22:6)?
3. The third of the prophecies, or blessings, is found in 24:5-9. This is poetic in form.
4. One can almost see Balak dancing about in his vexation (23:25).
5. Again, in 24:10, 11, Balak is a ridiculous figure as he pompously tries to convince Balaam that he has made a fool of himself. Does Balaam seem to be impressed?

The exact reverse of this Balak-Balaam spirit is what we should cultivate.

The people who influence you are the people who believe in you. It is a wonderful thing that in this hard, uncharitable world there should still be left a few rare souls who think no evil. This is the great unworldliness. Love "thinketh no evil," imputes no motives, sees the bright side, puts the best construction on every action.—*Drummond.*

Study IV.—A Generation of Discipline

Sixth Day: The Death of Moses

A worse harm than either war or magic spells could accomplish was wrought upon the Israelites by the influence of the impure worship of Baal-Peor. A pestilence followed their sensual indulgence. Afterward Moses brought a fearful punishment upon the Moabites with the sword. A number of important things had now to be looked to, for Israel was on the borders of Canaan, and Moses felt his own death approaching. His most impressive act was to appoint Joshua as his successor (Num. 27:18-23).

His life-work ended, this great man went alone to the heights of the Eastern Range, and from Mount Nebo looked across Jordan to the Land of Promise. There he died, and "no man knows the place of his burial."

Moses' Song, Deut. 32:9-12; and His Blessing, 33:27-29

1. These selections are the fragments of the two ancient poems called, respectively, The Song and The Blessing of Moses.
2. In the first passage, note the affection of Jehovah for his people "Jacob."
3. Is the simile of the eagle true to nature (32:11)?
4. The second passage is as notable for grandeur as the first is for tenderness of expression. Read both aloud.

What are the lessons that Moses teaches us from Mount Nebo? He had been called to release his fellow tribesmen, he was the founder of the religion and the national existence of Israel, and he had been faithful in the accomplishment of his task. Yet he saw but little of the fruits of his labor, and another led Israel into the Promised Land and experienced the joy of gathering in the fruits of his toil. "One man soweth, and another reapeth."—*Hooykaas.*

Study IV.—A Generation of Discipline

Seventh Day: The New Leader

A great responsibility was upon Joshua, for which he was fitted by his faith in Jehovah, his training under Moses (Deut. 34:9), and his military genius. Before him lay the task of conquest. Moses' work had been that of Jehovah's statesman; Joshua's was to be that of a general. Moses, in the fullness of his faith, had assigned to each tribe in advance its portion in Canaan, and had made such regulations as were called for by the change from a wandering shepherd life to settled agricultural pursuits. "With Moses, prophecy begins" (*Koenig*).

Joshua Inaugurated, Joshua 1:1-9

1. There are about four items of command and the same number of promise in this passage. Find and mark them.
2. Here begin the fruits of Joshua's obedience and fidelity in the service of Moses, the servant of Jehovah. What is the best reward of fidelity?

Do not pray for easy lives! Pray to be stronger men! Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers! Pray for powers equal to your tasks! Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle. But you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life which has come in you by the grace of God.—*Brooks.*

DIVISION III.

The Judges.—Study V

Study V.—Making a Home in Canaan

Study V.—Making a Home in Canaan

First Day: The Scroll of the Conquest: Scenes of the Central Campaign

Let us leave Joshua on the eastern bank of the Jordan and go down the years until we find the man who wrote the Book of Joshua. Let us stand beside him while he unrolls before us the scroll upon which he has etched the stirring scenes of the Conquest.

Scene I.—The host follows Joshua and the Ark across the Jordan, walking on the dry river-bottom, Jehovah having driven back the waters (3:14-17).

Scene II.—The walled city of Jericho blocks their progress. At their shout, according to the directions of Jehovah, the walls fall down flat. All the inhabitants are put to the sword (chap. 6).

Scene III.—Flushed with this success, the Hebrews attack the next city. The assault is repulsed. The cause is found in guilt against Jehovah. When that has been made right the city is taken (chaps. 7 and 8:1-29).

Scene IV.—The Gibeonites deceive Joshua into making an alliance. This involves him in war. Jehovah sends a terrible hail-storm which increases the panic of the enemy. Thus ends the part of the Conquest accomplished by the tribes united (chaps. 9 and 10).

The Fortunes of War, Joshua 8:18-29; and
The Law of Kindness, Matt. 5:43-48

1. Can you recall any war for conquest that has occurred within the last fifty years?
2. What other efforts are made between civilized nations before war is resorted to?
3. Mention some respects in which war is now less cruel than formerly.

"Keep close to Christ, if conflict sore betide;
Stand fast, remembering He is at your side
To give you strength
In battle, and the victor's palm at length."

Study V.—Making a Home in Canaan

Second Day: The Scroll of the Conquest: Southern and Northern Campaigns

The inhabitants of Canaan were considerably advanced in civilization and the arts of war. There were two great peoples in the land, the Amorites, who occupied the mountains; and the Canaanites, who lived in the plains and valleys. The latter had cavalry and chariots.

Scene V of the historian's scroll shows us the army in two divisions. We follow Caleb to the south. With the tribe of Judah he conquers the Amorites, and gains a foothold in the central mountainous district (chap. 10:28-43 and Judges 1:1-12).

Scene VI takes us northward, where Joshua leads the tribe of Ephraim and kindred tribes against a coalition of the dreaded Canaanites. He takes the foe by surprise and destroys their chariots (Joshua 11:1-12).

Scene VII opens in the Vale of Shechem, between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim. There the veteran Joshua has gathered the people. He rehearses the laws of Moses, and pledges them to keep the covenant with God (8:30-35, chap. 24).

Scene VIII.—Joshua's Farewell Address, Joshua 24:13-28

1. What is "the River," or, "the flood" (verse 14)?
2. What instances are found in the New Testament of the historic method of preaching, similar to Joshua's (see Acts)?
3. Among what four religions does Joshua tell the people to choose (14-15)?
4. What other statement may have weighed with them (15c)?
5. What action does he demand (21-24)?

Read books about Christ. Can you not spend thirty minutes of your life each day in getting to know the Perfect Man? Take up the biographies by those simple, earnest men, the authors of the Gospels. Begin with Matthew. You read a few chapters, and you fall in love with the Man. Slowly the knowledge changes character, and that is changed in turn into the same image. Then you say, "My Lord and my God!"—*Drummond.*

Study V.—Making a Home in Canaan

Third Day: Instantaneous Pictures of the Conquest

Taking leave of the prophet-historian of the Book of Joshua, let us stand with the writer of the Book of Judges. He has written stories of the Conquest which are like reproductions of photographs. He, too, is a religious teacher. We may call him a lecturer. He uses his pictures to enforce this idea:—

"Our ancestors who conquered Canaan by Jehovah's might were often oppressed, as we are now. But when they turned away from the things that displeased God, He turned to them again and gave them victory" (Judges 2:11-15; 3:7; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1, etc).

The Hebrews were a pastoral people when they left Egypt, but in Canaan they learned the art of agriculture. Then they added to the worship of Jehovah the worship of the Baals, who were gods of the harvest and the vineyard. Some of the conditions are pictured by the lecturer in his introduction.

Consequences of Breaking the Covenant with God, Judges 2:1-4, 11-23

1. What is the difference between innocence and virtue?
2. Should one run into temptation to prove himself strong?
3. Jehovah demanded that all altars to other gods should be destroyed. How would such action safeguard the Hebrews?

It is right to make covenants or vows. God does it. But, "If I do not make a promise," we say, "I shall not break one." But if the thing is one we ought to do, we ought to covenant to do it. The obligation is already there. The covenant does not make the obligation; it simply recognizes it and accepts it.—*Speer.*

"Lord, let me make this rule,
To think of life as school,
And try my best
To stand each test,
And do my work,
And nothing shirk."

Study V.—Making a Home in Canaan

Fourth Day: Barak and Deborah against the Canaanites

The Song of Deborah (Judges, chapter 5) is a very ancient martial poem describing the victory of Northern Israel over the Canaanites under a general named Sisera. A prose account is placed along with the Song (chapter 4). These Canaanites made life very bitter for the tribes in the north for many years. The Hebrews could not use the highways, and many villages were deserted. A patriotic woman named Deborah stirred the sentiment of revolt. She associated with her a prominent man named Barak, and at his call the soldiers of six of the tribes gathered together. A battle was fought in the Plain of Esdraelon. Sisera's chariots would have given him a great advantage, but a flood in the Kishon River turned them into a hindrance instead (5:4, 21). Barak's fierce attack decided the battle, which ended in a rout. Sisera fled, unattended and on foot. He came, exhausted, to an encampment of Kenites, whom he took to be friends, and applied to them for food and a place to rest.

The Death of Sisera, Judges 4:17-22; 5:24-31

1. Describe accurately in your own words the flight and death of Sisera.
2. How is the anxiety of Sisera's mother described?
3. What words of praise has the Song for Jael? Evidently, then, every act of help to Israel was regarded as an act for Jehovah, and so of religious value.

Any emergency calls for prompt and strong action. It is so in the spiritual and moral life.

How we shall behave in any emergency has been settled beforehand. The man who habitually wastes minutes in indecision is not the man who will save the day when a powerful blow for the right is called for. The way to be strong for an emergency is to be strong all the time.—*Selected.*

Study V.—Making a Home in Canaan

Fifth Day: Gideon and the Midianites

All through its history, Palestine has been exposed to the raids of the "Children of the East," the modern Bedouins, to whom it is "a land flowing with milk and honey," in contrast with their little oases. They made raids upon Hebrew territory, swarming like locusts, and went back loaded with the spoils of the field and vineyard. The poor Hebrews nearly starved. They took refuge in the mountains. They lived somewhat as did the early settlers in America in the days of Indian fighting. "Then they cried unto Jehovah, and he raised up a deliverer." Gideon's first adventure (see below) proved his fitness for daring leadership. A host of volunteers gathered around him, but he cared little for mere numbers. He sent home those who felt afraid, then rejected all except those who, while drinking at the stream, kept their eyes about them and their weapons in one hand, ready for an ambush. Three hundred were picked. A night attack was made on the Midianite camp. The Midianites awoke at the sound of blaring trumpets and crashing pitchers, to see lights dancing all around them. Doubtless estimating that there must be a company of men with every light, they became panic-stricken. They trampled and destroyed one another in their flight in the darkness. Gideon and his picked men pursued relentlessly, and "Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, and they lifted up their heads no more, and the land had rest."

Gideon's Proof of Courage, Judges 6:25-32

1. What state of mind had Gideon been in about the oppression (6:12, 13)?
2. Can you excuse his fears (27)?
3. Consider his father's quick-witted defense (31).

Gideon imagined a bold, brave deed; and then he did it. Knowledge and power both come chiefly from what we do. Let us bravely do to-day the best that we know, and we shall be both stronger and wiser to-morrow.

"It is what we THINK and what we DO that makes us what we ARE."

Study V.—Making a Home in Canaan

Sixth Day: The Later Judges

Gideon might have been king, but refused the honor. A son of his, named Abimelech, made himself a petty king by wholesale murder, and had a short and stormy reign in Shechem, and a violent end (Judges 9:6-54). Jephthah was a Gileadite who delivered some of the tribes from the domination of the Ammonites. He sacrificed his daughter in payment of a vow. This shows a dark shadow of the age (11:30, 31, 34).

The Samson stories were popular, and must have been told and retold with grim enjoyment; for the people suffered much from Philistine invasions. Samson was a hulking fellow, who could make a riddle (14:12), and loved a practical joke on a large scale, as, for instance, carrying off the gates of a town (16:3), or setting fire to his enemies' fields of ripe grain (15:4).

But the period was not all war and bloodshed. Sometimes "the land had peace." While men were fighting, women and youths kept the homes, looked after the flocks, fields, vineyards and orchards. The story of Ruth probably belongs historically to this period.

Samson, the Man of Might, Judges 16:4-21

1. What were the three false explanations of his strength? What was the real one?
2. What made him yield the secret at last (16)?
3. What two types of strength are represented in Jacob and Samson?

We have strong men to-day of a far higher type than Samson. "Joe" McCracken was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in medicine in 1901. During his course he was holder of the world's record for the hammer throw, of the intercollegiate record for the shot-put, captain of the track team, member of the 'Varsity football team, and president of the Christian Association. He is now in China, establishing a Christian Medical School in Canton, representing his Alma Mater.

Study V.—Making a Home in Canaan

Seventh Day: The Sanctuary at Shiloh

In this age, when the nation was struggling to establish order, there were many signs of the need of one strong leader to unite all forces. Worship of Jehovah was fostered at a few sanctuaries, among which Shiloh seems to have been best known. Thither would go a band of pilgrims from a village for worship, leading a sheep or an ox for sacrifice. The fat and entrails of the animal would be burnt by the priests as an offering to Jehovah; then the pilgrims would cook the rest, pay the priests their portion, and have a feast on the remainder. But even the sanctuary was stained with wickedness, for the priests, sons of the aged judge, Eli, were openly dishonest.

The Dishonesty of Eli's Sons, 1 Sam. 2:12-17

1. What was the usual custom about the payment of priests? How did these men change the method?
2. What evidence of general resentment is given?
3. Have you seen any instances earlier in the period of the Judges in which vice has been condemned and virtue upheld?

Men who are prominent ought to be particularly careful about their example, because its influence is great.

As the sanctuary at Shiloh was rated according to the character of its priests, so is every Christian association rated according to the character of the men who are leaders in it. So, in a sense, Christ is being estimated by the standard of our lives.

DIVISION IV

The Kings.—Studies VI to IX

Study VI.—The Beginnings of the Monarchy

Study VI.—The Beginnings of the Monarchy

First Day: The Work of Samuel

The disastrous battle of Aphek was fought in the early days of Samuel's life (1 Sam. 4:2-10). Though the Holy Ark was recovered, Israel continued to be under the power of Philistia. The condition of subjection was due, not to native weakness in the Hebrews, but to the lack of a strong leader to unite their forces. Samuel's first act was to call an assembly of the people and urge the need of fidelity to Jehovah (7:5). Under Samuel's leadership the Philistines were held back somewhat, and the much-needed religious reforms took place. Samuel was a judge in the modern sense, having a circuit including four important centers for the administration of justice. He was the last of the Judges and the first of the Prophets, announcing Jehovah's will to the people, and superintending the "Schools of the Prophets," which he seems to have founded.

Samuel, the Judge, and His Sons, 1 Sam. 7:15 to 8:3, and 12:3-5

1. Have you heard of polite methods of influencing legislatures and officials, which cannot be proven as bribery, and yet actually come under that head?
2. How do our judges come into office? Are they as subject to bribery as are legislators? Give a reason for your opinion.
3. Have you ever known presents, or favors, or flattery, to turn aside men in private life from strict honesty of speech and action?

"Thou shalt take no bribe [or undue praise]; for a bribe blindeth them that have sight and perverteth the words of the righteous" (Ex. 23:8).

There is often nothing to reward truth and honesty except themselves. You will be longer over your work if you refuse the unfair help. You will get less credit, and perhaps undeserved blame. The scales are heavily weighted against truth. Well, I say, tell the truth and act the truth on the first impulse, and let consequences be what they may.—*Wilson.*

Study VI.—The Beginnings of the Monarchy

Second Day: The Demand for a King

Although the defeat of the Philistines at Mizpah brought some relief from their oppression, the yoke still lay heavily upon Israel. The leading men presented a petition to Samuel for the appointment of a king. Doubtless he saw as well as they the need of unity and strong leadership, but he also foresaw the abuses of royal power that would almost surely come in with a monarchy.

It is likely, too, that the historian puts some of his own sentiments into Samuel's mouth; for, writing from the later centuries, he had seen more of the actual mischief done by bad kings than the old prophet-judge ever dreamed would be possible.

The Demand for a King, 1 Sam. 8:4-9, 19-22

1. Note three reasons given for wanting a king (5, 20).
2. Note four evils that Samuel foresaw in "the manner of a king that shall reign." You will find later how many of these Solomon fulfilled.

I would not dare, though it were offered me
To plan my lot for but a single day;
So sure am I that all my life would be
Marked with a blot in token of my sway.
But were it granted me this day to choose
One shining bead from the world's jeweled string,
Favor and fortune I would quick refuse
To grasp a richer and more costly thing—
To own this gem is to command the rest.
It is the Kohinoor called Self-Control.

—*Selected.*

Study VI.—The Beginnings of the Monarchy

Third Day: The Choice of Saul as King

There is a story in the early part of the Book of Samuel in which Samuel appears as a "seer," who selects Saul, the Benjamite, as king, and privately anoints him (1 Sam., chapters 9 and 10:1). The later narrative of the choice of king shows us a popular assembly and the drawing of the sacred lot. The choice falls on Saul. He is brought from hiding—so modest he is (10:23-25). At sight of his splendid physique and royal bearing, the host cries "Long live the King!" It was the first time that shout had ever been heard in Israel. A century later its echo might well be a groan. Now there was needed only a display of military ability to make Saul the people's idol.

Saul's First Military Campaign, 1 Sam. 11:1-13

1. How did the Ammonites show contempt for their enemy?
2. Compare 10:24, 27 with 11:12, 13. What spirit did Saul show?

Addison finely said: "A good conscience is to the soul what health is to the body." Spiritual health is the more keenly delightsome as the soul is higher than the body. A man who knows he has done right and can do it again, who can look into the eyes of his fellow-men without shame, and into the face of God with thankfulness, has attained a positive delight of soul that no self-indulgence, no intoxications can ever bring.—*Trumbull.*

Study VI.—The Beginnings of the Monarchy

Fourth Day: Saul's Wars

Having shown gifts as a military leader, Saul had his hands full of war during all of his ten years' reign. We are told of foreign wars—campaigns against Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Amalek. But one wonders how he found time for wars abroad, for the Philistines constantly occupied, or else threatened, the very heart of his kingdom.

In the beginning, Saul organized a standing army of three thousand men for defense. A while later, conditions were so bad that but six hundred fighting men could be mustered. When the situation was at its worst, Jonathan's daring saved the kingdom.

Jonathan's Exploit and Its Consequences, 1 Sam. 14:1, 6, 7, 13, 14, 20-23

1. Read carefully, so as to be able to describe what took place.
2. After Jonathan's success who fought the main battle?
3. From what other two sources did reinforcements come?

The soldier who is called to the front is stimulated, not depressed; the officer who is bidden by his general to a post of great responsibility, and so of hardship and peril, is thrilled with the joy of his task. An opportunity has been given him to prove himself worthy of great trust, which can be done only at the cost of great trouble.—*Brent.*

Study VI.—The Beginnings of the Monarchy

Fifth Day: Saul's Relations with Samuel

In the pursuit of the enemy Saul showed an unkingly impatience that nearly cost Jonathan's life (1 Sam. 14:24-27). Another instance of the same fault was shown later. The army was encamped at Gilgal in Ephraim. A campaign was on foot against Philistia. They were waiting for Samuel to come and hold a religious service. The prophet was late, and the king's patience evaporated. He turned the camp into a religious assembly, took the place of the absent Samuel, and offered the sacrifices. For this action the prophet predicted that Jehovah would find another man better fitted to rule Israel. Later, Saul "acted foolishly" again.

The Rejection of Saul, 1 Sam. 15:7-31

1. Compare Saul's course with the command in verse 3. In what respects did he fall short?
2. How could Saul salute Samuel as he did? Did he not know that his statement was untrue (20)?
3. Upon whom does he place the blame (20, 21, and 24)?
4. Was Samuel severe because he doubted Saul's sincerity (26)?
5. Was Saul's main anxiety about Jehovah's opinion or the elders' (30)?

A ship might as well try to sail north with her jib, and east with her foresail, and south with her mainsail, as a man to go one way in conduct, and another way in character, and another way in destiny. What we do belongs to what we are; and what we are is what becomes of us.—*Van Dyke.*

Study VI.—The Beginnings of the Monarchy

Sixth Day: David's Introduction at Court

Perhaps it was the pressure of trouble from the Philistine wars, perhaps the withdrawal of Samuel's support, possibly it was habitual lack of self-control—whatever the cause, Saul began to show signs of insanity. His temper was changeable, sometimes sullen, sometimes violent. Until the days of modern science, insanity was usually attributed to the influence of spirits, good or bad. In Saul's case, they advised that music be tried for his cure. David was found and brought before Saul because he was a skilful harpist. In the meantime, Samuel had found in this young soldier and musician the man who should, in due time, succeed to the throne.

The Anointing of David, 1 Sam. 16:4-13

1. Why did Eliab impress Samuel favorably?
2. Read verse 18 with verse 12, and give a description of David.
3. What was David's work at home? Was that always tame work (17:34-36)?
4. Memorize verse 7c.

Even in these days of sordid motives and questionable methods, the highest places still wait for the men of purity in thought and purpose. In the future, still more than in the past, there will come the Sir Galahads—the men of brawn and strength, combining athletic vigor and moral heroism—to whom will be given the vision of God.—*Selected.*

Study VI.—The Beginnings of the Monarchy

Seventh Day: Saul Sees a Possible Rival

A different account of David's first appearance at court is given in the ever-attractive story of David and Goliath (1 Sam., chapter 17). There he appears as a "mighty man of valor," such as the king was always looking for (14:52). David's reception by the king was at first cordial; but as Saul's mental condition grew worse, and David's popularity increased, and his friendship with Jonathan became stronger, the king's jealousy flamed often into violent rage. To his morbid view, David was scheming to get the throne. Jonathan's friendship seemed to him to show either that the prince was totally lacking in proper ambition, or else was even plotting with David against him. Matters came to such a pass that Saul and his son had a bitter quarrel, while David, his life repeatedly threatened, fled into exile.

Enmity and Friendship, 1 Sam. 18:1-16

1. Notice the vivid description of the friendship (18:1), and the equally expressive words for Saul's jealousy (9), tempered by another feeling (15, Am. R.V.).
2. What office did David first fill (5), and what office afterward (13)? Give modern names for them. Is the change indicative of Saul's malice?
3. Do you think there was danger of David's head being turned, considering his natural gifts and accomplishments (16:12, 18), with general popularity added (18:16)?

Popularity is a delightful thing if it comes without seeking, and if the man who has it has no fear of losing it. Not praise, but excellence, is the ultimate end which every worker ought to have in view. —*The Outlook.*

STUDY VII.—David in Exile and on the Throne

Study VII.—David in Exile and on the Throne

First Day: David in Exile: His Band of Outlaws

Being driven from court, David's first thought was for his own people. On his way to Bethlehem he stopped at the sanctuary of Nob (1 Sam. 21:1). By deceiving the priests he was helped to food and weapons. He sent his parents to the care of the King of Moab. Then he found a stronghold in a cave near Bethlehem, where his fame soon drew around him not only his relatives, but also a group of other refugees, malcontents, and runaway debtors, to the number of four hundred (22:2). They were rough, desperate men. David kept them busy foraging, sometimes among the nearby farmers and herdsmen, whom they protected from other marauders. Sometimes he may have piloted caravans for toll, or made raids on desert tribes. A visit was received from Jonathan, who assured the exile that he had friends at court who wished him well, and were ready to warn him of danger and help him in other ways.

David in Adversity, Ps. 59:1-4, 16, 17

1. Is a smooth life a sure mark of God's love? and is a hard life always a curse?
2. Where did David learn his most valuable lessons—in court life or in his exile?

A reason for praying: "Why should we ask God to help us, when God, if He be all-knowing, knows about our needs?" But is prayer only a continual asking? A greater thing than getting some boon is the realization of a bond of love and confidence between father and child, between God and man. This is the high result of prayer.—*W. B. Carpenter.*

Study VII.—David in Exile and on the Throne

Second Day: David in Exile: Saul's Enmity

Saul could not be satisfied with David's mere exile. He spent half of his energies in pursuing him. First, on the information of a foreign spy, he put to death the priests of Nob (1 Sam. 22:18), who had innocently helped the refugee. Then he personally led a large force in pursuit. In the wilds near Maon they blocked David's escape, and almost had him in their hands, when the king was compelled to withdraw by the news of a Philistine invasion (23:27). At a later time Saul was informed of the exile's position by the Ziphites, who did not relish the neighborhood of a regiment of hungry outlaws. Thus informed, Saul made repeated efforts to surround David and his men. On at least one occasion he thus placed his life at their mercy.

David Spares Saul's Life, 1 Sam. 26:6-12

1. On what errand did the two men go?
2. Why did Abishai think it right to kill the king?
3. Why did David think it would be wrong?
4. How did he think the king would be sufficiently punished?

The principle among us known as the "Golden Rule" was not practiced by Saul. Memorize the words of Jesus in Matt. 7:12.

The only way to get rid of an enemy is to pray for him. Without that, though you may resolve not to hate him, you surely will end in doing so. Read and mark Rom. 12:20, 21.

In all the universe there are no two souls alike. There are no two with the same work to do; no two whose talents are rivals, or whose gifts conflict or interfere. How this thought ought to put an end at once to all the envy of life!—*Havergal.*

Study VII.—David in Exile and on the Throne

Third Day: A Vassal to the Philistines

Saul's promises (1 Sam. 26:21) could not set David at ease. Moreover, it is noticeable that the king did not invite him to return. In this situation David took his six hundred men into Philistia, and became a vassal to the King of Gath (*27:2*), occupying the town of Ziklag. After the anxious, lonely months just past, these men must have enjoyed living again in homes with their families. David's whole position here was based on deception. He made Achish think that he had turned forever against his own people. Here, as before, he kept his men busy fighting, making raids in the south against the enemies both of Philistia and Judah. Achish seemed very ready to believe the tales he brought about these expeditions.

David's Standards of Honesty and Ours, 1 Sam. 27:8 to 28:2

1. What were the consequences to others of the deception of Achish (*27:9-11*)?
2. Into what predicament did David himself fall (*28:1*)?
3. Can you point out the same moral issue in modern business relations?

Be pure, be wise, be strong, be independent. Let the world go, if it is necessary that the world should go. Serve the world, but do not be the servant of the world. You can minister to its life.—*Brooks.*

Study VII.—David in Exile and on the Throne

Fourth Day: Saul's Last Battle

David was saved from his dilemma by the distrust of the Philistine princes. They compelled Achish to send him back. Arrived at Ziklag, David found that it had been burned by enemies, who were returning southward with their captives and plunder (1 Sam. 30:3). He followed, surprised them, and recovered all. Out of the additional booty he sent presents to the influential men in Judah. Meanwhile the last days of Saul's reign were passing. In the face of the Philistine incursion he found that he had alienated his best counsellors, and there was not a priest nor prophet on his side. He seemed to himself to be deserted by God and man. He went into battle, tired out in body and brain, and hopeless. The battle was begun at Mount Gilboa, and ranged over the plain of Jezreel. Saul and his sons were killed. The army was routed, and terror spread so widely that the Hebrews who lived east of the Jordan deserted their towns. David's expression of sorrow at hearing the news of the death of Jonathan and Saul is entitled:—

The Song of the Bow, 2 Sam. 1:17-27

1. This dirge falls naturally into two parts; mark the division.
2. What abilities as a soldier are ascribed to Saul?
3. Is there any trace of exultation?
4. Is the mourning for Jonathan more personal and heartfelt than the mourning for Saul?

Who misses or who wins the prize,
Go lose or conquer as you can;
But if you fall, or if you rise,
Be each, pray God, a gentleman!

—*Thackeray.*

It is quite the fashion to say "sentimental bosh" to anyone who preaches such an old-fashioned thing as honor; but among true gentlemen it is just as real an article as ever, and it is one of the few things that never rings false. It is only the man who believes in such a thing as honor that is worth anything.—*Walter Camp.*

Study VII.—David in Exile and on the Throne

Fifth Day: King of Judah

At this critical point what is David's policy? His exile has lasted for about six years. He is a vassal to the Philistines. He has kept on good terms with his own people of Judah, and has avoided giving offence to Israel. The throne is vacant. Many have looked to him as their next ruler. A man of ambition, with the temper of a dictator, and such a regiment as David's at his back, would have known what to do. But David, in obedience to the oracle, goes peaceably to Hebron, and there is anointed King of Judah. The date is about 1020 B.C.

Israel held aloof. Saul's old general, Abner, was their natural leader. He placed on the throne a son of Saul, named Eshbaal, or Ishbosheth, and acted as his regent. Meanwhile, though David had refused the resort to violence, he did not scorn diplomacy. He sent a hearty message to the men who rescued King Saul's body from the Philistines.

The Message to the Men of Jabesh, 2 Sam. 2:4b-7

1. How does David show himself both generous and diplomatic in this message?
2. Does he "advertise himself"? Is an Oriental less scrupulous in such matters than we are?

Suppose I have an impulse to express a generous thought, but I hesitate, uncertain as to how it will be received. I express it. It is received coldly. Shall I express the next generous thought that comes to me? A woman once paid Jesus a beautiful tribute of affection (Matt. 26:6-13). It cost her a great deal, and the act might be called "forward," if you think of it coldly. Some of the bystanders did think of it coldly, and sharply criticised the woman, but Jesus called it one of the finest things that had ever been done. Balance the criticism against that praise. Which is worth more?

Study VII.—David in Exile and on the Throne

Sixth Day: King of Judah and Israel

There was some sharp fighting between the men of Abner and those of Joab, David's general. In one of these conflicts a blood feud was started between Abner and Joab (2 Sam. 2:12-29). Eshbaal seemed to have just enough strength to resent being dependent upon Abner. They had a quarrel, and the regent turned fiercely from the young king, and forthwith turned all his influence toward the recognition of David by Israel. When he had all the lines in his hands he made offers to David, who promptly gave him a personal hearing. All was being arranged when Joab murdered Abner. Close upon this event followed the assassination of Eshbaal. David was innocent, and, to avoid being suspected of complicity, he punished the assassins, reprimanded Joab, and called for public mourning (3:31). The leaders of Israel soon afterward came to Hebron and anointed David as their king. All the tribes of Israel and Judah were formally united at last.

Kindness to Jonathan's Son, 2 Sam. 9:1-7

1. Had David gained more or given more in his friendship with Jonathan?

Here we find David hunting about for some means of showing how much he felt the value of Jonathan's friendship.

Most of the kindnesses we receive from parents and friends we never have opportunity to return. In youth, very often, we are not conscious of the debt. But we can pass the kindness on. We can earnestly dedicate our lives to the mission of doing good.

"He that gives himself up for the service of his brethren, finds himself in the service of his brethren."

Study VII.—David in Exile and on the Throne

Seventh Day: The New Capital

For the new and larger kingdom a new capital had to be found. Hebron was a strictly Judahite town. The tribes of Israel were sensitive, and were determined to claim their share of honors and privileges. The Canaanite stronghold Jebus, an eyesore to the Hebrews, lay just across the border of Judah, in the limits of Benjamin. David attacked and gained it by assault. He fortified it, then imported materials and built in it a royal palace. This "City of David" occupied the southwestern of the four hills on which Jerusalem is built.

But it was not enough to have made the capital a center of government. The religion of Jehovah must have a visible center, too. Patriotism and religion were one among the people of Jehovah.

Public Worship Established, 2 Sam. 6:1-5, 16-19

1. In Christian worship, what takes the place of the Holy Ark?
2. Find the four parts of this religious ceremony. What four parts of Christian worship do these represent in an imperfect way?
3. Why did Michal scorn the king?

As to public worship:

Every right-minded man will go to church, because it is advisable and expedient. If he goes he will be fed. He will be helped, and he will have a better chance of survival in the higher life.—*Drummond.*

Study VIII.—The Reign of David

Study VIII.—The Reign of David

First Day: The Philistine War

David probably remained a vassal to the Philistines during the seven and a half years of his reign over Judah. When Israel was joined to his realm these neighbors felt decidedly concerned about the growing power of the Hebrews (2 Sam. 5:17). Before David could prepare to meet them they were upon him in force. The king took refuge in the stronghold Adullam, and there gathered an army. Two battles were fought. The power of the enemy was broken. The seizure of an important Philistine fortress later clinched the victory. The Hebrews gained a seaport for commerce with Tyre. David was now left free to organize and strengthen his kingdom. His army, or "host," was probably a militia organization, ready for service when called. The army was commanded by the king's nephew, Joab. His bodyguard, after the Philistine war, was made up largely from those former enemies. The "thirty mighty men" may have been the officers of the host.

The Feat of the Three Mighty Men, 2 Sam. 23:13-17

1. Did the men do this thing to prove their bravery, or their love for the king?

All men love deeds of bravery. When they cannot find things to do that demand courage and strength, they invent them. But this very day you will find situations that will test your courage and strength. Do not miss these while you dream about the future.

"You cannot run away from a weakness; you must, some time, fight it out or perish; and if that be so, why not now, and where you stand?"

Study VIII.—The Reign of David

Second Day: Foreign Wars

A census was taken at the king's command. It was a military measure, apparently intended to be the basis of a more thorough military levy (2 Sam. 24:2). It was unpopular with the people, and was opposed by some of the leaders. A new levy may have been the first move in Israel's foreign wars. The first of these was against Moab, which resulted in making that country pay tribute (8:2). Ammon and Zobah were also conquered and made dependent. The conquest of Edom, begun by Saul, was completed by David. The country south of the Dead Sea, as far as the Gulf of Akabah, passed into David's realm, including ports on the Red Sea, and the control of a valuable caravan-trade route.

The kingdom was organized with David as chief executive and chief judge (8:15; 20:23). Under him were the following officials: a commander of the army, chronicler, two high priests, secretary, overseer of task-work, captain of the guard, and a group of counsellors.

David's Idleness, 2 Sam. 11:1

1. Point out the first fault here, the second, the third.

As to the use of time:

"Never be unemployed, and never be triflingly employed."—*Wesley.*

As to temptation:

A man cannot live safely in a negative purity. His safety lies in the supplanting of the old passions by new and better ones. He must discover new interests which leave no room for the old. Christ not only summons a man to repentance, but also supplies him with a new passion.—*F. G. Peabody.*

Study VIII.—The Reign of David

Third Day: Domestic Troubles

Family troubles and domestic rebellion marred the portion of David's reign that should have been the most glorious. As his domain extended, his style of living became more luxurious. He had enlarged his harem by new marriages. Growing luxury led to idleness; he did not go any longer to the wars. Then, through idleness, he stooped to an abuse of his royal power; he took for his own the wife of one of his soldiers, and later caused the man's death. David failed, too, to control his sons, and thus he prepared the soil for rebellion in his own family. Absalom, the eldest living son, was a handsome, magnetic fellow, and he went about winning the hearts of the people away from his father. When the plot was ripe he set up his own rule in Hebron. The movement was so strong that the royal party withdrew with their king from the capital and crossed the Jordan.

Absalom Plotting, 2 Sam. 15:1-6

1. Did this thing take place once, or repeatedly? Give the conversation in your own words.
2. Compare verse 4 with the methods of a ward politician.
3. Was it David's fault, or Absalom's, that the son should show such disloyalty?

Read Proverbs 4:20-27. Memorize verse 23.

Another course may look easier and more attractive, but pursuing duty for duty's sake is always sure and safe and honorable.—*William McKinley.*

Study VIII.—The Reign of David

Fourth Day: Absalom's Rebellion

A sad procession wound its way over the brook Kedron (2 Sam. 15:30). David's enemies took the hour of his misfortune to come out and curse him. Yet, in the general crash many remained true. The entire bodyguard of six hundred men was there, and the captains, Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. Supplies, too, were contributed. Meanwhile, Absalom marched into the capital. Counselled by a spy of David's, he delayed pursuit, and the loyalists kept pouring into the king's camp. When the rebels finally attacked, Joab and his lieutenants met them with three divisions. In the battle that followed, the rebels became confused and scattered in the thick forest, and thus their heavy losses were multiplied. The arch-rebel himself was caught and held fast in the gnarled branches of a terebinth tree (18:9). There he was found and slain by Joab. When David heard the news that the rebellion was crushed, and that his son was dead, the feelings of the father overmastered those of the king. Seeing his grief, the returning army felt as though they had been scolded instead of praised, and they went sulking to their tents. Joab's sharp reproof awakened the king from his sorrow.

David's Sorrow for Absalom, 2 Sam. 18:31-33

1. Was it the fact of Absalom's death that caused the father's sorrow?
2. What, in your opinion, was Absalom's greatest fault?

The words of the wise counsellor of the Book of Proverbs, if followed by a young man, will turn his life into a very different channel from that which Absalom's life followed to so wretched an end:—

> Trust in the Lord with all thy heart
> And lean not upon thine own understanding;
> In all thy ways acknowledge him
> And he shall direct thy paths.
>
> —*Prov.* 3:5, 6.

Study VIII.—The Reign of David

Fifth Day: The Kingdom Restored

After the rebellion was quelled the king prepared to return to Jerusalem. Israel volunteered for the place of escort, but David gave the honor to Judah. In jealous resentment, part of Israel then withdrew under a leader named Sheba (2 Sam. 20:1). Joab put down this revolt with a strong hand, and in doing so he murdered Amasa, whom David had appointed to take Joab's place (20:10). In the latter part of his reign, David bought the southeastern elevation of Jerusalem as a place on which to build an altar to Jehovah. On this spot, in the succeeding reign, the Temple was built. David's foreign conquests had brought in rich booty, which was handed down to Solomon as a Temple-building fund.

The King's Song of Thanksgiving, 2 Sam. 22:1-4, 17-19, 50, 51

1. Note the frequent occurrence of the word "my" in the first passage. By what figurative names does David call Jehovah? Every Christian uses a possessive when he prays to the Father.
2. Note the frequent occurrence of the word "he" in the second passage. What things does David say Jehovah has done for him? Every Christian recognizes the Father's loving agency in his life.
3. The first word of the third passage is logically significant. What does David resolve to do? Every Christian is won by the Father's goodness to be grateful, and he lets a devoted life express his gratitude.

Since from His bounty I receive
Such proofs of love divine,
Had I a thousand hearts to give,
Lord, they should all be Thine.

—*Stennet.*

Study VIII.—The Reign of David

Sixth Day: David's Army Commander

King David had a genius for making friends. Prince, prophet, soldier, foreigner, all are found in his circle, loyal through prosperity and through misfortune. The devotion of his captains and advisers is an evidence of his strong and lovable character. Their faithful services made possible his brilliant reign. Particularly does this statement apply to David's army commander, Joab.

He was the king's nephew (1 Chron. 2:15, 16), and perhaps the relationship accounts for his boldness in contradicting David (2 Sam. 3:22-26). But his boldness sometimes grew to headstrong disobedience, and he put his own judgment in place of the king's commands (2 Sam. 18:5, 10-14). He even dared to kill the man whom David had appointed in his place, and then went on with a stolid defiance that must have been exasperating (2 Sam. 19:13 and 20:8-13). When he reproved the king to his face (2 Sam. 19:1-8), David ought to have been large-spirited enough to overlook the impoliteness, for it is plain that Joab was in the right. He was indispensable, because of his ability as a commander (2 Sam. 10:9-14 and 12:26-29). To him is due much of the credit for David's foreign conquests. Joab was rough in his manners and violent in his methods, but his heart was true as steel. David seems to have feared and disliked him, yet depended upon him. We are told that late in his reign he turned over Joab to his son, recommending punishment rather than reward. It is scarcely believable that the generous David could be so mean-spirited, but he was very old at the time of the incident.

The King and His General (see references above)

1. After reading some or all of the passages referred to above, in what respects do you consider Joab a bigger and better man than his master?
2. What was Joab's greatest fault, and his greatest virtue?

Are the Master's interests safe in my hands? Do I "do always the things that are pleasing in His sight"? Can He trust me so thoroughly that I do not need to be watched?

"Jesus, throughout His career, was impelled by a high sense of duty. 'As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.' This was the governing principle of His life. In His boyhood he said, 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' "

Study VIII.—The Reign of David

Seventh Day: Summary of David's Reign

The work that David did may be placed under two heads: war and peace. Through the wars, Israel first became independent of the Philistines, and then conquered her neighbors across the Jordan. By these foreign conquests David enriched the treasury with booty and revenue, enlarged the kingdom, and opened the way for commerce.

The work of peace was, first, the union of the North and the South. Through the confidence he inspired universally, the prejudices between the tribes were smoothed out somewhat, and they came together for united action. By united action the ties were made closer still, and a national consciousness grew up in place of the merely tribal spirit. Then commerce with Tyre was begun, and the style of living improved both in the court and among the people.

But David did his greatest work in giving prominence to Israel as the people of Jehovah. He established forms of worship in the court and in the realm. He had close and friendly relations with the prophets, who lived in their communities, or "schools," and preached moral and religious truth. After his sin of adultery and murder he humbly accepted reproof from a prophet.

Nathan's Parable, 2 Sam. 12:1-9, 13-15

1. What is a parable?
2. Theft is bad enough, of course, but what made this especially bad (2-4)?
3. Was the case in the parable as bad as David's sin?

If your friend falls into wrong ways of living, what ought you to do about it?—ignore it? drop him? talk about him behind his back? Try the rule given in Gal. 6:1, 2 (instead of "meekness" read "gentleness."—Am. R.V.).

Let us cultivate the habit of thinking about Christ. Sin begins in the thoughts; so does virtue.

If I think of the world I get the impress of the world; if I think of my trials and sorrows I get the impress of my trials and sorrows; if I think of my failures, I get the impress of my failures; if I think of Christ, I get the impress of Christ.—*Cobb.*

Study IX.—The Reign of Solomon

Study IX.—The Reign of Solomon

First Day: Solomon's Accession

We have some glimpses of the court in David's old age, showing the intrigues of an Oriental household.

There were two claimants for the throne, Adonijah, the eldest son, and Solomon, son of Bathsheba, whom the king had named privately as his successor.

Adonijah took matters in hand early. He won to his cause the influence of Joab, organized a bodyguard, and assumed other marks of royalty. He arranged a banquet for the leaders of his party, scheming to have them proclaim him king then and there. But the opposing party reported his actions and plans to David. The king at once had Solomon anointed and enthroned. At the first signs of activity on the part of Adonijah, Solomon executed both him and Joab. By the death of these and other possible enemies the new king smoothed the way for a despotic reign.

Solomon's Prayer, 1 Kings 3:4-10

1. Where was he praying? Evidently, then, Jerusalem was not the only recognized place for worship and sacrifice at this time.
2. In what words does the young king show humility?
3. How does he show his sense of heavy responsibility?
4. What things might he have asked for (11)?

"Solomon loved Jehovah—only——." Every one of us has a weak place. Happy the man who knows where the defects in his character are, and guards sternly against slipping into temptation at those points.

"Watch as though on that alone
Hung the issues of the day;
Pray that help may be sent down.
Watch and pray."

Study IX.—The Reign of Solomon

Second Day: The Empire: Domestic and Foreign Conditions

The life of the people was simple in the days of Saul. By the end of Solomon's reign the little shepherd kingdom had grown into an empire, splendid and rich. The court was renowned for luxury. The kingdom was divided into twelve districts, under overseers, and each district was compelled to furnish court supplies for one month in the year.

No important wars were waged. Cities on the frontier were strongly fortified. A standing army was maintained. Cavalry and chariots were used by Israel for the first time. Solomon did not widen his boundaries; in fact, Edom shook off his rule, and the new kingdom of Syria arose in the northeast with a threat of future trouble.

The friendship of Tyre was inherited; an alliance was made with the King of Egypt. Commerce grew. With Egypt a profitable trade in horses was maintained. From Tyre, Solomon imported lumber for his great building operations. Skilled workmen came thence. Tyrian sailors manned the Hebrews' fleet on the Red Sea. Gold, spices, and other rich products of the far East were thus imported.

The Choice of a Path, Prov. 4:10-19

1. Mark the two natural divisions of subject matter, and write a title for each.
2. Subdivide the second portion, and write sub-titles.
3. Memorize verse 18.

It is impossible to classify men, and call this one bad, and that one good. Nevertheless, the man who habitually does an unmanly or unclean or dishonest thing is the man whose "way" is meant in verse 14. "Avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it and go in another direction."

Study IX.—The Reign of Solomon

Third Day: The Building of the Temple

Solomon's greatest accomplishment, in the eyes of later generations, was the building of the Temple of Jehovah. He selected the site on Mount Moriah, the southeastern hill of Jerusalem, which is now covered by the Mosque of Omar, the "Dome of the Rock." Seven years were needed for the task. The building thus erected stood for four centuries. The treasure gathered by David was used in the building, and the additional needs were met by heavy taxation. Labor was forced from the Canaanites, probably from the Hebrews also (1 Kings 5:15).

The Temple consisted of outer courts, surrounding a roofed building. All was made of marble, shaped at the quarries. Under the roofed portion were chambers for the priests, and the Temple proper, consisting of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. The principal object in the Holy Place was the great altar of sacrifice. In the Holy of Holies the Ark of the Covenant stood, shrouded in darkness (8:12).

"Who Shall Ascend?" Ps. 24

1. Mark the natural division into two parts. Which is the more spiritual portion—the one that speaks more directly to your life?
2. The latter part is probably much older than the former. It may have been chanted while the Holy Ark was being returned to the Temple after a victorious campaign. Do you think it would fit such a use?
3. For "vanity" substitute "falsehood" (4; Am. R.V.). Now, to sum it up, what preparation should one make for true worship (4)?

"Solomon built the house and finished it"; and that suggests a resolve for to-day: This is to be a day of honest work throughout—no loose ends! Build and finish!

What was Christ doing in the carpenter's shop? Practicing. Do not quarrel, therefore, with your lot in life. Do not be perplexed because temptation seems to thicken around you more and more. That is your practice which God appoints you.—*Selected.*

Study IX.—The Reign of Solomon

Fourth Day: Alliances and Idolatry

Solomon's Temple remained standing for four centuries. To later generations it was a visible proof of the splendor of his reign and also of his piety. But the Temple was only a partial indication of Solomon's wealth; for it formed merely one of a magnificent group of royal buildings (1 Kings 7:1). As to the royal piety, we must be careful not to over-estimate. It is certain that the king built temples to other gods and worshipped in them. It came about in this way: in the East, increasing wealth and power is often advertised by additions to the harem. So it was with Solomon. His wives were foreign princesses. These marriages sealed international alliances; hence, possibly, the peace which characterizes this reign. Nowadays every power sends an ambassador to live in the capital of every friendly power; in Solomon's time, just as naturally, every foreign wife brought with her the priests of her national religion. So it came about that Solomon built temples on Mount Olivet for these various religious cults, and perhaps even took part in the worship.

Solomon's High Places, 1 Kings 11:1, 4-8

1. This is the important fact here: the worship of these divinities encouraged immorality, while the worship of Jehovah demanded holiness. Verify the latter statement from yesterday's reading.
2. The Jehovah-covenant again and again demanded separation. Verify this from verse 2 of this chapter.
3. How do you account for the king's actions? Policy? Indifference?

A man of positive ideals, who has made his life-choice of the highest, and has set before him a goal for his striving, seldom entertains the question, "What harm is there?" He never even has need to ask "What good is there?" For, out of the fertility of God's thought comes pouring such wealth of opportunity for the investment of his consecrated energies that he can keep busy doing the best things.

> We rise by the things that are under our feet;
> By what we have mastered of good and gain;
> By the pride deposed and the passion slain,
> And the vanquished ills that we hourly meet.
>
> —*Holland.*

Study IX.—The Reign of Solomon

Fifth Day: Splendor and Tyranny

Solomon's empire, though the admiration of later times, was founded upon tyranny. His splendor was hollow. He wrung it out of the sweat of his subjects. They had to pay the price with heavy taxes. They toiled in quarry and forest to build him a palace, and neglected their flocks and fields. The labor was forced. Besides all this, the king was unfair; for he laid heavy burdens upon Israel and spared his own tribe, Judah. And all this oppression that Solomon might "build for his pleasure"! The people knew the cost of his magnificence—the throne of ivory overlaid with gold, and all the rest. And when they "brought every man his tribute year by year" (1 Kings 10:25), it must have been small comfort to them that he "made silver to be as stones for abundance in Jerusalem," inasmuch as they had earned it and he had only stamped it! To be sure, they did not feel this oppression as bitterly as we should feel it now. They probably had a certain pride in the renown of Solomon; but there were leading spirits who were on the verge of active rebellion.

Jereboam's Revolt, 1 Kings 11:26-28, 40

1. What was Jereboam's tribe (26)?
2. The causes for revolt may be gleaned from statements in 4:7, 22, 23, 27 and 5:13-15 and 10:25. Name three causes.
3. How nearly does this agree with 1 Sam. 8:10-18?
4. Is anything said about the nature and results of the revolt?
5. What two statements descriptive of Jeroboam are given?

If Solomon had acquainted himself with the lives and hardships of his people, he might have gone back to his palace and to his selfish luxuries, but he would not have gone in ignorance of the cost of that kind of life.

Two of the causes of "class" prejudices are selfishness and misunderstanding. We know so little about how the "other half"—whichever half it may be—lives. If every rich man would exchange visits one day in the year with a poor man, each might still be selfish, but be less capable of misunderstanding each other.

Resolve: To-day I will make advances to a fellow who is not in "my set." Perhaps he is well worth knowing.

Study IX.—The Reign of Solomon

Sixth Day: Religion and the Prophets

On Mount Moriah stood the Temple of Jehovah. On Mount Olivet stood temples of the foreign divinities. Between these hills raged a battle that will never end until Right finally triumphs in the world. It was the battle between the moral worship of Jehovah, who summoned men to come to His shrine with "clean hands and a pure heart," and the worship of Ashtoreth and Milcom and Chemosh, who beckoned their worshippers into degrading practices in the name of religion. King Solomon built all these temples. He fostered the worship on both hills. He added to the enticements of these temples the force of his own example. He tried to join together things that are eternally antagonistic. The common people were hardly aware of the conflict, but there began to rise men who saw more deeply—who declared that Israel must worship Jehovah only, and have nothing to do with foreign gods. From our distant standpoint it is evident that the issue of this contest was either progress or extinction for Israel. Solomon's imperial splendors cannot blind us to the principle which he transgressed.

The Prophecy of Ahijah, 1 Kings 11:29-39

1. What was the prophecy regarding Solomon? Regarding Jeroboam? How symbolized?
2. Do you think it likely that these prophets were men of strength, in perception and will? Give reasons for your answer.
3. What evidence is there that Ahijah kept in close touch with affairs of every-day life?

So long as moral strength is counted a treasure, against which no culture, art, or knowledge can be allowed to weigh, so long must we exalt the party of the prophets above that of Solomon.—*Oort.*

Study IX.—The Reign of Solomon

Seventh Day: The Division of the Kingdom

Now we see the double reason why the prophets were not supporters of the government. In the first place, they felt the popular burdens and heard the mutterings of discontent; further, they knew that the North was restless. Israel had been bound to Judah only with difficulty by the magnetic David, and by the tyrannical Solomon. They now heard the grumbling threat of disunion.

The religious situation furnished the second reason why they were ready to favor this disunion, as Ahijah's message to Jeroboam indicates. They perhaps felt it to be the only way of saving the nation from the utter corruption of Jehovah-worship.

When Solomon's death is recorded, no word of praise for his reign is added (1 Kings 11:43). Rehoboam, his son and successor, brought up in the court of an Oriental despot, was pampered and wilful. Two groups of advisers were about him,—old men who had seen the days of David, and young men trained like the prince.

The Division of the Kingdom, 1 Kings 12:1-17

"One of the most vivid passages of the Old Testament."
—*H. P. Smith.*

1. Did the incident occur in Judah or Israel? What significance has the place?
2. How did Jeroboam happen to be there? Is it likely that Ahijah's influence was back of all this?
3. Note clearly the request. Was it reasonable?
4. What do you find here that suggests the temper of the American colonists in A.D. 1774?

"If thou wilt be a servant unto this people——" (12:7).

Thank God every morning when you get up that you have something to do that day which must be done, whether you like it or not. Being forced to work, and forced to do your best, will breed in you temperance and self-control, diligence and strength of will, cheerfulness and content, and a hundred virtues which the idle never know.—*Kingsley.*

DIVISION V

Kings and Prophets of Israel.—Studies X to XII

Study X.—From Jeroboam to Ahab

Study X.—From Jeroboam to Ahab: First Half of Israel's History: Glimpses of the Pre-Assyrian Period

First Day: Jeroboam's Religious Policy

Jeroboam had gained his throne by division; he must now make it secure by entire separation. Israel must be self-sufficient, with its own capital, officials, and, above all, its own religious center to take the place of the Temple in Judah. So the new king refitted two ancient sanctuaries, each richer in religious traditions than Jerusalem: at Bethel in the south, and at Dan in the north. Then followed his master-stroke of policy, by which he made the new sanctuaries very popular in Israel.

Calf Worship, 1 Kings 12:28-30

1. Nowhere do we find a prophet of Jeroboam's time who condemns this image-worship. But how does the writer refer to this policy (15:26, 34 and 16:19, 26)?
2. Can you see why this should be a just charge? Was the next step likely to be upward to a more spiritual worship, or downward to a sensual worship?

"Jeroboam pandered to the rude instinct which makes materialism in worship so much more attractive to weak minds than spirituality."

"So the king took counsel and made two calves of gold," 1 Kings 12:28. With whom did he take counsel?

Let me remember that right action and good influence to-day will surely result from taking counsel with God, grasping His wishes and fulfilling them.

Every day, to every one of us, brings its questions, its worries, and its tasks. Thus we get our daily spiritual exercise. Every day we are blessed with new opportunities for the development of strength of soul.—*George Hodges.*

Study X.—Israel, from Jeroboam to Ahab

Second Day: The Troubles of Rehoboam

Let us go aside from Israel, and see what turn affairs were taking in Judah. Rehoboam set up in Jerusalem a petty imitation of his father Solomon's splendor. But he was not allowed to enjoy his pitiful luxuries in peace. "There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually." We can easily imagine which had the worse of it. Also, larger troubles came upon Judah. The Pharaoh of Egypt, Shishak, has left an inscription at the famous Karnak, telling about his invasion and plundering of the cities of Judah, and even Israel. Rehoboam suffered heavy loss. The Temple was robbed of the treasures that had been left by Solomon, and Rehoboam made up a counterfeit.

Gold Shields and Brass, 1 Kings 14:25-28

1. Did the worship seem to go on as before?
2. Where were the new shields kept?
3. There were "brass shields" in Jesus' time—brazen formalities and sober-faced shams in public and private worship (Matt. 23:25-27). What was Jesus' estimate of these?

If faith stop short of God and rest in church or creed or priest; if work stop short of actual service of our fellow men, and rest in splendor of ritual, or glow of pious feeling, or orthodoxy of belief; then our religion becomes a vain and hollow thing, and we become Pharisees and hypocrites.—*W. DeWitt Hyde.*

Study X.—Israel, from Jeroboam to Ahab

Third Day: The Prophecy of Situation

The natural situation of Israel and Judah furnishes us with a prophecy of the history which we shall see unfolding in them.

Judah sits among her mountains, hemmed in by the Dead Sea and the Desert on the east and south, the weakened Philistia on the west, and Israel on the north. With one-fourth as much land under cultivation as Israel, her natural resources were small, and her population of shepherds and vineyard-keepers had little motive for going abroad for trade, and were not apt to be plundered by invaders.

Israel, on the other hand, rich and inviting, was exposed on every side, except the south, to the covetous grasp of nations stronger than herself. Like a shallow clown she often made herself the sport and the prey of these neighbors whom she tried to imitate. "Israel's career of two centuries was more brilliant; but Judah outlived her by a century and a half of rich spiritual discipline."

The Cultivation of Virtues, 2 Peter 1:5-8

1. What is the order of the virtues to be cultivated?
2. What is the effect of their growth in a man?
3. Are we to have just a little of each virtue (8)?

In our Father's school there are many benches. This life is schooltime. Whatever the word that God writes on the top of your page—Patience, Courage, Forgiveness—copy it over and over until He gives you another word. Never murmur. Do your best to solve your problems. If they are hard, try hard. If you are in the dark, say: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."—*M. D. Babcock.*

Study X.—Israel, from Jeroboam to Ahab

Fourth Day: History That Is Alive

What makes us eager to dig out the obscure history of the petty doings of kings and armies? Only the desire to see emerge the living figures of the prophets, and hear them speak in our tongue their modern message. This otherwise dull history forms a living background for the Hero-prophets. Hear Pastor Koenig, brother-worker of Pastor Wagner of Paris:

"Is it not a thrilling story? Here are the people, stiff-necked, blind; here are their kings trying to copy the civilization of great empires that are founded on falsehood and violence; here are the priests, believing that they have a monopoly of religion; here are the true prophets, the strongest men, the heroes, of their times."

The Growth of the Kingdom of God, Matt. 13:31-33

"This history of the people of God shows God gradually revealing Himself to man, that man may be purified and sanctified, and prepared for the final revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ, the normal man, who gives us in His life, death, and resurrection the measure of God's infinite compassion toward us."—*Koenig.*

Prayer: God, reveal Jesus the Man to me, and reveal Jesus the Christ within me, that I may be shaped into the living likeness of Him.

"It is a good thing to have a model to imitate, but it is even better to have within us a living spirit which will work out our inward ideal; it is best of all to have both, given us in Jesus Christ."

Study X.—Israel, from Jeroboam to Ahab

Fifth Day: A Memory-Grasp of Israel's History

Let us try to grasp the main outlines of Israel's history.

The entire scope of it is from the Division of the Kingdom in 937 B.C., to the Fall of Samaria, in 721 B.C., which is a little more than two hundred years. The Revolution of Jehu divides that space into two nearly equal parts: 937 B.C. to 842 B.C., and 842 B.C. to 721 B.C.

Call the first part the Pre-Assyrian Period, and the second the Assyrian Period, because Jehu first paid tribute to Assyria.

Fix in mind the name of a king, a prophet, and a war in each period: (1) King Ahab, the prophet Elijah, the war with Syria; (2) King Jeroboam II, the prophet Amos, and the war with Assyria.

These statements may be compared with the diagram, page 147.

The Maker of History, Isa. 10:5, 6, 12-15, 24, 25

1. Do these foreign nations admit Jehovah's power?
2. How are they likened to a tool in the hands of Jehovah?
3. What is His aim in the use of these foreign nations?

The Bible is not a thing to be worshipped. A savage might bow down to a telescope, but an astronomer knows better. The way to know it is to use it. Find God with it. See what God was to the men of the Bible, and then let Him be the same to you. See the proofs of His power, and then prove that power for yourself in yourself.—*M. D. Babcock.*

Study X.—Israel, from Jeroboam to Ahab

Sixth Day: The Blood-stained Throne of Israel

We are getting ready to understand the times of King Ahab, and the prophet Elijah, whose lives fall in the end of the Pre-Assyrian Period.

Let us stand here in Israel, with King Omri, Ahab's father, in about 880 B.C. Look back over the fifty years since the Division. The track is marked with treason and assassination. Jeroboam's son ruled two years, and then was murdered. The murderer enjoyed a long reign, but his son was murdered after two years of royalty. The assassin occupied the blood-stained throne seven days, and then, at news of the coming of the general, Omri, backed by the royal army, he burned down the palace over his own head. Thus, four families ruled in Israel in the violent changes of a half-century, while Judah to the end of her history had always a descendant of David on the throne. "From the first, the curse of instability rested upon a throne which had been founded in rebellion." (*Ottley.*)

The Trail of a Godless "Policy," 1 Kings 16:18-20, and

The Lamp of a Godly Life, 1 Kings 15:4, 5

1. "The way of Jeroboam" was plainly marked, and Zimri could follow it easily. Recall Jeroboam's policy; state it.
2. How is David's uprightness stated (15:5)?
3. Does the Bible smooth over the sins of the best men (15:5)?
4. For how many generations does a good influence last (Ex. 20:5, 6)?

It is easy to do wrong, and difficult to do right, and when you see that, you sink. That is the result of leaving God out of the reckoning. He can turn our weakness into strength, and enable us to thunder an unyielding "No" to the world, with its Godless glitter; the flesh, with its fascinating allurements; and the devil, with his seductive lie.—*F. A. Atkins.*

Study X.—Israel, from Jeroboam to Ahab

Seventh Day: Work of the Soldier-King, Omri

Omri was the father of Ahab. He built Samaria, and made it his capital. He selected for its site a hilltop which he made almost impregnable. Omri was a vigorous ruler, and caused Israel's power to be widely felt. He had friendly relations with Judah and with Tyre, but waged wars with Moab and other neighbors.

The Moabite Stone is a most valuable record of the time of Omri. It was found at Dibon, in Moab, in 1868 A.D. The stone contains an inscription made by King Mesha, of Moab, and in it occurs this sentence: "Omri was King of Israel, and he afflicted Moab many days because Chemosh [the Moabite deity] was angry with his land."

"This inscription, and the fact that the Assyrians referred to the Northern Kingdom as the House of Omri, long after his family had ceased to rule over Israel, shows the importance of the man and his reign. What David did for united Israel, Omri appears to have done in a lesser degree for his kingdom. Instead of weakened by war and subject to the Syrians, he left it united and organized, thus preparing the way for the brilliant return of Ahab."—*Kent.*

Making Conquest of Wisdom, Prov. 2:1-11

1. What is "wisdom"? and "understanding"?
2. How is wisdom to be found?
3. What will it do for the finder?

"Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others" (Phil. 2:4). "Seekest thou great things for thyself?" said the prophet; "seek them not." Why? Because there is no greatness in things. Things cannot be great.—*Selected.*

Study XI.—Israel: the Fight for the Jehovah-Religion

Study XI.—Israel: the Fight for the Jehovah-Religion

First Day: King Ahab's Victory Over Syria

The new King of Israel found himself a vassal to Syria. Ben-hadad was king in Damascus, and made crushing demands on Ahab. At first, Ahab could do nothing but submit to every insult. But as one demand succeeded another, at last he flashed out with the courage born of despair. It was better to be destroyed fighting than to submit to such shameful abuse. In reply to the last haughty message from Syria, Ahab sent back this word, "Let not him that putteth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off." When the opposing forces were ready for battle, Ahab consulted the prophets for divine counsel. The ranks of Israel were pitifully thin. The veterans knew the hopelessness of the conflict. The prophet advised that the young pages of the princes should be put to the front. These young soldiers had an enthusiasm that made them confident against all odds. At noon the attack was made; the outcome was a thorough rout of the Syrian forces.

In spite of defeat, Ben-hadad soon prepared out of his vast resources for another campaign. A second time Jehovah gave Israel the victory. The defeated king came and threw himself upon the mercy of the victor. Ahab received him graciously, called him brother, and made very mild terms for the vanquished. How must the faithful soldiers of Israel have been angered to see the advantage they had won at such awful hazard thrown away so lightly!

The Victory of Enthusiasm, 1 Kings 20:13-15

1. Were these young men experienced soldiers?
2. When was the attack made (16)?
3. Would the enemy be prepared at that time of day?
4. Tell the outcome in your own words (16-21).
5. Was Ahab allowed to celebrate his victory (22)?

Christianity is in a very true sense a young man's religion. Jesus Christ was a young man, and, for the most part, his apostles and disciples, who spread the new faith which has changed the world, were young men. The world of our day will be saved by young men. The call to "leave all and follow Me" is meant for the ear of youth; it moves on the soul of youth with the quickest magic.—*W. J. Dawson.*

Study XI.—Israel: the Fight for the Jehovah-Religion

Second Day: Enter Jezebel; Enter Elijah

Ahab had another inheritance from his father that tended to offset the vassalage under Syria. It was an alliance with Tyre. The advantages of this bond both for peace and war were manifold, and Ahab was quick to make the most of it. He married Jezebel, daughter of the King of Tyre and Sidon, who had been a priest of Baal, and had seized the throne. Jezebel has become to us the type of a powerful and unscrupulous woman. "If 'Ahab sold himself to work wickedness,' it was because 'Jezebel, his wife, stirred him up'" (Farrar). Arrived in the palace of Samaria, Jezebel directed the religious affairs of the kingdom. Ahab seemed completely under her influence. Although strong in war and keen in diplomacy, he seemed to consider religion a minor domestic affair. There is evidence that he did not himself abandon the worship of Jehovah; but he built a great temple to Baal in Samaria, and allowed Jezebel to introduce Tyrian priests, and set up the vile symbol, the Asherah, or sacred pillar. Jezebel considered the religion of Tyre more attractive than that of Israel. Ahab thought it a matter of indifference, and allowed his subjects to make their choice. Now there comes upon the scene a man who thunders out the truth that there is one God, Jehovah, who looks upon Israel as His people, and His only, and who will not tolerate a divided loyalty.

The King and His Bride, 1 Kings 16:30-32, and Elijah's Appearance at Court, 17:1

1. Read 16:31 and then 21:25. How did Ahab "walk in the sins of Jeroboam," and how did he "sell himself to work wickedness"?
2. Describe Elijah's appearance at court, using your imagination to give the background.
3. Is it natural that a woman like Jezebel should cause the rise of a man like Elijah?

Let a man live for duty and he lives nobly; his life will be a benediction to men. Let a man live carelessly, aimlessly walking in the imagination of his own heart, and he will live weakly, shamefully.—*Trumbull.*

Study XI.—Israel: the Fight for the Jehovah-Religion

Third Day: The Great Contest

The story of the three years' famine is given with graphic details in the Elijah stories (1 Kings, chapters 17 to 19). "The Elijah stories are among the masterpieces of the Old Testament" (Kent). This prophet had lived alone with God so much that kings were no more to him than other men. Elijah gave Ahab no credit for his brilliant deeds in war and diplomacy. All the glory of that was overbalanced by the king's weak yielding to his wife's influence in matters of religion and morals.

Now three years have passed since the prophecy of divine punishment by a drought. No rain has fallen. Almost every growing thing has been eaten up. Most of the flocks and herds have died. Far and wide the messengers of the king have gone in search of Elijah. The vengeful Ahab blames Elijah, and not himself. On a sudden the prophet confronts the king again. "Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?" says the king. And the bold answer is, "Thou art the troubler of Israel, in forsaking the commandments of Jehovah!" Then Elijah proposes a final contest, to prove who is the God worthy of Israel's worship.

The Contest on Mount Carmel, 1 Kings 18:30, 36-40, 41, 45, 46

1. Contrast Elijah's simple prayer (36) with the agonies of the Baal prophets (26, 28, 29).
2. Note Elijah's sarcastic humor (27).
3. Remembering how the people had recently followed Baal, what sudden change of loyalty is now seen (39)?
4. Did Jesus ever use a miracle as Elijah used this—to make people believe in God (John 2:23, 24)?
5. Can you justify the last scene (40)?

There can be no compromise with sin. He who believes in the ultimate overthrow of all wickedness sees the arrogant iniquity of the world about him and says to it, "You are weak, however strong you may seem. I have no bargain to make with you. Sometime I shall see you perish." He says to the sin that lingers in his own heart, "You are an intruder; and you shall be cast out."—*Brooks.*

Study XI.—Israel: the Fight for the Jehovah-Religion

Fourth Day: The Queen's Wrath; Elijah's Flight

The contest is ended. The popular verdict is rendered against Baal and against Jezebel—"Jehovah is God; Elijah is his prophet." It is a crushing defeat for Baal-worship. At evening came the climax of the day of great things, when the rain-storm broke over the famished land. Elijah, athlete of the desert, tucked up his robe into his girdle, and ran the dozen miles from Carmel to Jezreel, the storm chasing him (1 Kings 18:46). Imagine the bounding exultation of the prophet because of a complete victory after a three-years' contest! Jehovah had won! Imagine Jezebel's frenzy when she heard from Ahab's own lips about the disgrace to her gods and the death of her prophets! In that hour she sends out a terrible threat against Elijah. He hears about it, and his spirit sinks from exaltation into weary discouragement. Only now does the prophet feel the full effects of the day of terrible strain. He flees southward—a night, a day—and still southward, over treeless plains and bare hills, in a stupor of discouragement. It has been a lonely fight, and the odds against him were tremendous.

"Right forever on the scaffold,
Wrong forever on the throne."

The Meeting Between God and a Disheartened Man, 1 Kings 19:9-14

1. What had Jehovah sent to Elijah first of all (19:5)?
2. What three nature-forces appeared to this man of force?
3. How did Jehovah finally come to him?
4. What command did the prophet receive (15)?
5. Was he correct in saying "I only am left" (18)?

One wants to cry to every weary and discouraged Christian, "Oh, keep on, however hard the work appears to be! Be obedient. Do the will of God, however bitter it may be, sure that there is sweetness at its heart, and never resting until you have found its sweetness."—*Brooks.*

Study XI.—Israel: the Fight for the Jehovah-Religion

Fifth Day: Doom Pronounced on the Tyrant

Ahab's downfall came at last, not through his toleration of Baal-worship, but through his tyranny. Having power, he wanted more power; having an ivory palace, he wanted enough land around it to show it off properly. A vineyard lay near by. He must have it. Who could deny the wish of the King? But Naboth, the owner of the vineyard, refused all the royal offers. He would neither sell nor exchange. The spirit of the sturdy land-owning peasant was in him. Even a king dared not break down the rights of land inheritance and private ownership. Ahab, defeated, retired to his palace and threw himself down upon his ivory couch in a fit of sulks. There Jezebel found him, and rallied him on being so easily thwarted. She promised him better results, and went to set her own plans to work (1 Kings 21:8-14). The upshot of it all was that in a day or two she announced the death of Naboth and the confiscation of his property; the king might take possession. Such an outrage might pass in Tyre, but in Israel less than a century had gone by since the revolt from Solomon's tyranny. While the king is walking in his new possession, Elijah appears before him with a stern message of doom. "When Iniquity hath played her part, Vengeance leaps upon the stage."

The King and His Conscience, 1 Kings 21:16-20, 27-29

1. Again God speaks from behind the scenes (18, 19).
2. Apply Jesus' story of the rich fool (Luke 12:16-21).
3. Was Elijah really Ahab's "enemy" (20)?
4. Why did the king think so?

It is a terrible falsehood to say that to fall once does not matter. Even by one fall there is something lost that cannot be recovered again. It is like the breaking of an infinitely precious vessel, which may be mended, but will never be again as if it had not been broken. Again, one fall leads to others; it is like going upon very slippery ice on the side of a hill; even in the attempt to rise we are carried away again further than ever.—*James Stalker.*

Study XI.—Israel: the Fight for the Jehovah-Religion

Sixth Day: Ahab's Last Battle

The prediction of the unnamed prophet, that Ahab's mercy to Ben-hadad would cause his own ruin (1 Kings 20:35-43), had its fulfilment. The Syrian king did not keep his pledge: Ramoth in Gilead was not given up. For a long time Ahab had to suffer the humiliation without redress. By-and-by an opportunity seemed to be presented to force Syria to keep the terms of the treaty. The situation was this: Jehoshaphat, the good King of Judah, was paying a visit to Ahab. Ahab proposed that they make joint war on Syria for the recovery of their rights. Jehoshaphat consented, but suggested that they inquire through the prophets for the will of Jehovah. Four hundred prophets, who appeared to be well posted as to the king's wishes, predicted success. Jehoshaphat seemed to catch the ring of insincerity. He asked whether there was not some other prophet of Jehovah; perhaps he had sturdy Elijah in mind. Then the king reluctantly sent for Micaiah, a prophet whom he had thrown into prison for giving unfavorable predictions.

Micaiah's Courage, 1 Kings 22:13-18, 26-28

1. What effort does the messenger make to have the matter come out pleasantly?
2. What reply does Micaiah make to him?
3. Do you catch the scornful sarcasm in the prophet's first answer (15)?
4. What does the prediction in 17 mean?
5. Did Ahab think that a true prophet could control the answer of Jehovah (18)?

God give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready hands;
Men whom the lust of office does not kill,
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy,
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor, men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue
And damn his treacherous flatterings without winking;
Pure men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking.

—*Holland.*

Study XI.—Israel: the Fight for the Jehovah-Religion

Seventh Day: Summary of Ahab's Reign: Foreign and Domestic Affairs

We have seen that Ahab ended with Syria but little better than he began. He preserved friendship with Tyre, and was bound by treaty and marriage with Judah. In the East had arisen the great imperial power, Assyria, now turning her attention westward. With Ahab's reign ends the Pre-Assyrian Period. The great battle of Karkar, of which we have no record in the Bible, is mentioned in the monuments as an unsuccessful struggle on the part of Syria and Israel in alliance to check the advance of Assyria. It occurred in 854 B.C., close to the end of Ahab's reign. After that, Assyria dominated Israel until its end. The following words are taken from King Shalmaneser's inscription: "Karkar, the royal city, have I destroyed—10,000 foot soldiers of Ahab of the land of Israel, etc."

Ahab built up a luxurious court, with Solomon, apparently, as his model, whose blunders of idolatry and tyranny he imitated. He intended that religion should be a matter of minor importance; but neither Jezebel nor Elijah would have it so. The prophet was determined that the peculiar mission of Israel should not be forgotten. While revolt was stirring against Ahab's dynasty, Elijah was making sure of the succession of fighters for the Holy God of Israel. Although Elijah did not totally destroy Baalism, he did preserve Israel's Jehovah-worship.

The Choice of Elisha, 1 Kings 19:19-21

1. What was Elisha's occupation?
2. Was he a man of some wealth?
3. Did Elijah have to urge him to take up the prophet's work?
4. Elisha's farewell feast reminds you of what similar celebration by one of Jesus' disciples (Matt. 9:9)?

At first Elisha seems almost to have been stupefied by the sudden necessity for so tremendous a decision. The thought of giving up all the comforts of ordinary life and severing so many dear and life-long ties was mixed with anguish. So, in our time, Father Matthew shrank from his great temperance efforts, till one day, rising from long prayer, and at last convinced of his destined task, he uttered this homely resolve, "In the name of God, here goes!"—*Farrar.*

Study XII.—Israel: The Second, or Assyrian Period.

Study XII.—Israel: the Second, or Assyrian Period

First Day: The Schools of the Prophets and Elisha

In the times of Elijah and Elisha the schools of the prophets again came into prominence (Study VI, first day). These "Schools" were communities of religious men, situated near the great sanctuaries at Bethel, Gilgal, and elsewhere. "Sons of the Prophets" they called themselves. They accepted the authority of some great leader. Elijah was such a leader, and afterward Elisha. The opening chapters of the second book of Kings (chapters 2 to 6, and 13) contain more than a dozen stories about Elisha. They tell about wonders and marvels that Elisha was believed to have performed. Some contain a high grade of spiritual teaching, like the Healing of Naaman, the Leper (chapter 5). Others contain no moral teaching, and nothing of interest except the purely marvelous (6:1-7). One has the flavor of a practical joke (6:8-23). Elisha was very different from Elijah. The latter, as we have seen him, was a rough man of the desert, coming and going like a whirlwind, his message usually one of warning and condemnation, backed by the weight of a tremendous personality. Elisha, on the other hand, was a creature of civilization, in early life a farmer, later living in towns. He was interested in public affairs, advised people in every-day matters, went with the army on a campaign, and gave advice to kings. The chief task inherited from Elijah was to bring about the downfall of the family of Ahab, by stirring up a revolution.

The Lord's Hosts at Dothan, 2 Kings 6:14-17

1. What general difference is to be marked between the miracles of Jesus and those credited to Elisha?
2. Is our faith in Jesus based upon His miracles?
3. What spiritual lesson does one learn from the vision at Dothan?

"The hosts of God encamp around
The dwellings of the just;
Deliverance He affords to all
Who on His promise trust."

Study XII.—Israel: the Second, or Assyrian Period

Second Day: The Torch of Revolution

Ahab had made a host of enemies. He offended the prophets when he married Jezebel, and brought into Israel her Baal-religion. He offended everybody by his acts of oppression like that against Naboth. People could see Jezebel's hand in all the domestic policy. But the discontent did not break out during the king's lifetime, and not until after his second son had made an attempt at ruling the country. At last, one day, when everybody had become tired of Joram's feeble rule, rebellion flamed up. Elisha, backed by the prophets, kindled the torch. He sent a young prophet running to a frontier fortress to find a young captain of cavalry named Jehu, and anoint him as king. The account of the event is most vivid (chapter 9). At once Jehu found support among his fellow officers. Quickly and fiercely he struck. With a force of cavalry he set out for Jezreel. There King Joram and his nephew, King Amaziah, of Judah, came out to meet him, and fell before his fierce onslaught. The revolution was begun. The day prophesied by Elijah had come upon the house of Ahab.

Partnership for the Overthrow of Wrong, 2 Kings 10:15-17

Jehonadab was a Rechabite (Jer. 35:1-11), of a family that abstained from the use of wine; a desert man, who followed the simple tent life of the old days. He was likely known as a fierce opponent of the royal family.

1. Frame in your own words the conversation between Jehu and Jehonadab.

Whenever you do a good work you will find other men doing the same kind of work, and probably doing it better. Envy them not. Fortify yourself with the grace of large-heartedness. Only one thing truly needs the Christian envy: the large, rich, generous soul which "envieth not."—*Drummond.*

Study XII.—Israel: the Second, or Assyrian Period

Third Day: Jehu's Revolution

After Jehu's wild ride to the capital he proceeded to put to death all possible claimants to the throne. He secured the death of the two kings, and drove his chariot horses over the body of Jezebel, and caused the death of over one hundred princely descendants of Ahab. Then this man of blood felt reasonably certain of his position. His next work was to show to the prophets his "zeal for Jehovah." A Baal-festival was proclaimed; the temple was thronged with Baal-worshippers; Jehu himself deceived the crowd by offering the sacrifice. Then the soldiers fell upon the worshippers with their swords, and not one escaped the massacre. Images, altars, temple, all were destroyed. Thus ended Baal-worship in Israel. It is a mark of the barbarous customs that were common in that age that we do not read of a single protest being uttered against Jehu's cruelties until a hundred years later, when Amos and Hosea condemned his brutality (Hos. 1:4, Amos 7:9).

Self-Conquest, Rev. 6:2 and 3:20, 21

1. What is the secret of self-mastery (3:20)?
2. What state of mind does this victory cause in us (John 16:33)?

> Man, who man would be,
> Must rule the empire of himself! In it
> Must be supreme, establishing his throne
> On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
> Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.
>
> —*Shelley.*

Study XII.—Israel: the Second, or Assyrian Period

Fourth Day: The Last Great King in Israel

Sixty years after Jehu's revolution, years of misery and humiliation for the kingdom, Jeroboam, the fourth in the line of Jehu, came to the throne. Unwonted peace prevailed because Israel's enemies were busy fighting one another. In peace Israel flourished. Jeroboam extended his borders until he ruled as large a realm as David's. Agriculture and commerce were developed. Wealth increased. Foreign customs and fashions were introduced; there were rich feasts where the banqueters reclined on ivory couches. With the increase of wealth poverty increased also. The cities contained palaces and slums. The rich were pitiless; they "oppressed the poor and crushed the needy." Merchants were habitually dishonest, using "balances of deceit." Bribery was common, and justice was twisted in the courts. Yet, with all the injustice and immorality, the worship of Jehovah, represented by golden calves, flourished. The temples at Bethel and Gilgal were crowded. Priests competed with one another in holding splendid religious festivals. The offerings in the temples were many and rich. But religion had no influence over daily life. Priests and people alike thought the two things had no connection. They thought they were pleasing Jehovah with a magnificent ritual and rich sacrifices, and that He was showing His favor by sending them victory and prosperity. A stern-faced stranger who had come to Samaria and Bethel on business noted all these things with keen eyes, and went on his way southward, to his home in the hills of Judah.

The New Covenant, Heb. 8:8-12

1. Where were the Laws of Moses written?
2. Where were the laws of the new covenant to be written?
3. What was the great commandment of Christ?

To drift along as some people do, through this world of sin, as if there were nothing in it to fear; to sport and dance, and eat and drink and sleep, as some people do, under the arch of heaven, as if there were no One above it to fear—this is the part of the fool, who hath said in his heart, "There is no God; there is no sin; there is no judgment."—*Van Dyke.*

Study XII.—Israel: the Second, or Assyrian Period

Fifth Day: The Shepherd-Prophet Amos

The stranger from Judah, a shepherd named Amos, showed himself to be the keenest and strongest man of his time. He had observed the self-satisfied prosperity of Israel's people. He saw the mighty storm gathering in the East which must soon burst in an invasion; hence all Israel's wealth looked to him like a bubble. His thoughts ranged through a wide world. He saw Jehovah as the God of the nations of the whole earth, not as the local God of Israel. He believed that God Jehovah would move nations at His will. Further, he understood Jehovah as the God of Right, who required men to be clean in life, honest in dealings, merciful to the weak, unselfish in sharing, simple in mode of living. Compared with these great matters of character, what were sacrifice, and ritual, and vestments? But in 760 B.C. nobody had grasped these thoughts except Amos. What should he do? If he spoke he would be met with unbelief and scorn. Amos added the greatness of action to the greatness of thought. He went to Bethel and spoke out his message. With magnificent strength and art he denounced wrongs, threatened judgment, invited penitence. Then he wrote out the message, and we have it to-day, fresh and modern, in its timely meaning for this century.

THE MESSAGE OF AMOS

(a) Conditions of society in Israel's cities, Amos 6:4-6 and 5:10-12.
(b) False worship of Jehovah, and true worship, 5:21-24, 14, 15.
(c) The death of the nation foreseen, 5:2, 27 and 9:4, 8-10.
(d) Jehovah the God of all nations, 9:7 and 6:2.
(e) Result: the prophet is threatened by the angry priests, 7:10-15.

1. Mention some signs of luxury.
2. Point out social wrongs.
3. What is Amos' manner under the priest's bluster?

The moment we begin to act upon our real convictions, to encourage within our minds the growth of real thoughts; to ask not what is popular, but what is right; not what everybody does, but what we ought to do; not how easily we can get through life, but how righteously; in that hour we become men; nay, more, we become heroes.—*W. J. Dawson.*

Study XII.—Israel: the Second, or Assyrian Period

Sixth Day: Hosea

Hosea was a native of Israel, who spoke and wrote his message a little later than Amos. The book of Amos reads like one connected speech; but that of Hosea seems like a collection of fragments of speeches delivered at various times. The last part probably belongs to the troubled days after Jeroboam II, about 735 B.C.

Hosea had married a woman whom he loved; but she became unfaithful to him, and abandoned her home and children. Time passed. Hosea learned that his wife had fared miserably, and was about to be sold as a slave. He bought her freedom, and forgave and loved her again.

So, Hosea says, Israel had been unfaithful to Jehovah. Her "people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." They have made "hired alliances." Their priests are corrupt. Therefore they shall be carried into exile and scattered among the nations. But God loves His people still, and yearns over them like a father over his children. "Thus Hosea proclaimed the supreme truth of religion that God is Love" (Kent). So God moved forward step by step in making Himself known, until Jesus Christ fully revealed the Father (Study X, fourth day).

THE MESSAGE OF HOSEA

(a) Jehovah's bitter rebuke, Hosea 4:1, 2 and 8:4.
(b) The divine Father's unceasing love, 11:1-4, 8, 9.
(c) His earnest invitation, 6:6 and 10:12 and 12:6 and 13:14.

1. Amos was all sternness. Select a passage that shows Hosea's tenderness of heart.

"Hosea's touching, heart-born tones sob out and caress us."
—*Cornill.*

2. What is the invitation of Jehovah?

When Stanley found Livingstone in Africa, he tried to prevail on him to return to England. The queen would knight him, the people would honor him; he might spend his last days in ease. But Livingstone had something better than honors and comforts. He had a great duty. He said to Stanley: "I must finish my work." And he found a joy in that duty that no rewards could possibly have given him.—*Trumbull.*

Study XII.—Israel: the Second, or Assyrian Period

Seventh Day: The End of Israel

The warnings of the prophets were not heeded. "The unthinking mass of the people, led by worthless kings, false prophets, corrupt statesmen, and unscrupulous priests, was doomed" (Ottley. See also Study X, fourth day). The mighty hand of Assyria closed over Palestine in 734 B.C., and tore away all but a fragment of Israel. Syria was destroyed. Ten years later the pitiful remnant in Samaria revolted. Again the Assyrian army invaded, and after a siege destroyed Samaria in 722 B.C. Shalmanezer's inscription says, "I carried away 27,000 inhabitants. In their place I settled the men of conquered countries." Thus was founded the mixed race of Samaritans.

The writer of the book of Kings sums up the causes of Israel's destruction (2 Kings 17:7-18). "But for the main causes we must look to the pages of Amos and Hosea. A religion that did not touch the heart, heathen customs in worship, social oppression, selfish wealth, these things in all ages—ours, as well as theirs—lay states in the dust at last" (*Fry*).

No Saviour but Jehovah, Hosea 13:4, 9 and 14:1

1. Where is the blame put for Israel's downfall?
2. What had Jehovah done for His people?
3. What was He ready still to do?
4. Where had they looked for help (7:11)?

Be strong!
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift;
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle: face it; 'tis God's gift.

Be strong!
Say not the days are evil—who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce—O shame!
Stand up, speak out—and bravely, in God's name

Be strong!
It matters not how deep intrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day how long;
Faint not, fight on. To-morrow comes the song.

—*Maltbie D. Babcock.*

DIVISION VI

Kings and Prophets of Judah.—Studies XIII to XV

Study XIII.—Judah: From Rehoboam to Ahaz

Study XIII.—The Kingdom of Judah: From Rehoboam to Ahaz: The Pre-Assyrian Period

First Day: Relations of Judah and Israel

Let us pair off Judah's history with Israel's. Refer to Study X, fifth day. Consult the diagram on p. 148. Place beside each king of Israel one of Judah.

Beside Ahab put Jehoshaphat, who made alliance with him. Beside the rebel king Jehu put the reforming king Joash. Beside the prosperous Jeroboam II put the equally prosperous Azariah, called also Uzziah.

Summary: Ahab and Jehoshaphat; Jehu and Joash; Jeroboam II and Azariah. Compare the diagram, p. 147, with that in connection with Study X, fifth day. They can be fitted together.

The father of Jehoshaphat was "the good king Asa." Two things in Asa's reign are of interest: he removed his mother, Maacah, from the palace because she introduced the worship of "a horrible image" (1 Kings 15:13); and he bought the aid of Syria against Israel with the use of Temple treasure.

Asa's Prayer, 2 Chron. 14:8-12

1. Was his army large? Why pray, then?
2. What advantages and what dangers surround a man who is rich in money and friends, in his efforts to work for God (Lu. 18:24-27)?

One day, as Mahomet was crossing the desert, after a weary march, when they were encamping, he overheard one of his followers say, "I will loose my camel and entrust it to God." The prophet immediately exclaimed, "Friend, tie your camel and entrust it to God." We cannot expect an indulgent Providence to make up for our neglect of proper effort. No amount of faith is an excuse for laziness.—*Stevenson.*

Study XIII.—Judah: From Rehoboam to Ahaz

Second Day: "The Good King Jehoshaphat"

Jehoshaphat began to reign in the prime of his young manhood. Judging from his conduct in the battle of Ramoth Gilead, one might doubt the man's personal bravery (1 Kings 22:32). However, he was an enterprising king, and developed the resources of the realm, built castles and store-cities. The alliance made by marriage between his family and Ahab's (Study XI, sixth day) had far-reaching consequences. At once it put him on friendly terms with Phœnicia, with its high civilization. Consequently, it is not surprising to learn that Jehoshaphat had ships on the Red Sea with which he proposed to make voyages for the gold of Ophir. But if the builders of the ships were Phœnicians, the sailors were Hebrews; and they had the vessels wrecked before they were fairly out of harbor. The alliance with Jezebel had further and more serious results for Judah. Athaliah was a true daughter of Jezebel, with "the same fierceness, fanaticism, and unscrupulous wickedness" (Farrar).

Many interesting details about Judah's history in this period are furnished in the Second Book of Chronicles.

The Presence of God in Daily Work, 2 Chron. 19:4-7

1. What is meant by the phrase "respect of persons"?
2. Give an instance in which Christ came into close contact with men's occupations.

"Around us rolls the ceaseless tide
Of business, toil and care,
And scarcely can we turn aside
For one brief hour of prayer.

"Thine is the loom, the forge, the mart,
The wealth of land and sea;
The worlds of science and of art,
Revealed and ruled by Thee.

"Work shall be prayer, if all be wrought
As Thou wouldst have it done;
And prayer, by Thee inspired and taught,
Itself with work be one."

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Study XIII.—Judah: From Rehoboam to Ahaz

Third Day: A Successful Insurrection

Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram, the husband of Athaliah, imitated the religious customs of Israel, under his wife's influence. She was just as strong, and just as blind to the effect of her Phœnician customs upon the people of Judah, as one would expect of a daughter of Jezebel. Her son Ahaziah ruled but a few months, and then (Study XII, third day) was killed in the revolution of Jehu. At this point Athaliah became a Fury. She killed all the princes and seized the throne for herself. But her daughter craftily concealed and saved alive one infant prince, Joash. For six years Judah endured a queen. "Either Judah must have been sunk very low, or the talents of the woman must have been very commanding to make such a yoke secure" (Farrar). Joash reached his seventh year, and the high priest Jehoida thought it time to strike a blow in the prince's favor. The royal guard was found ripe for insurrection. Plans were skilfully laid. On a Sabbath day, at the time of a great festival, the revolution was effected. It was the hour to change the guard. At the priest's command, all were kept under arms. Surrounded by solid ranks of soldiers with swords drawn, the little prince was brought forth. Jehoida placed the crown on the boy's head.

Peace in a Well-ordered Realm, 2 Kings 11:17-21

1. The death of one person and the crowning of another brought what results (20)?
2. Compare with this the conditions that prevail in a heart where evil is put down and right is enthroned.

There are two selves in each one of us, the lower self and the higher self. The lower self is always listening for the baser voices, the higher for the nobler. The great surrender of self to Christ is the triumph of God who is speaking in us, and whose Spirit is our true self. In thus surrendering ourselves we come into the true possession of ourselves.—*Speer.*

Study XIII.—Judah: From Rehoboam to Ahaz

Fourth Day: The Reforms of Joash

The influence of the strong Jehoida made up for the king's youthfulness. The people were called together at once. The priest explained to them their duty to God and their king, and asked them to enter into a solemn covenant of allegiance. The oath was taken with enthusiasm. Among the first works of reform now undertaken was one of destruction, the next was one of construction. The temple of Baal, built by the half-Phœnician queen, was destroyed, and the priest was slain. Then the Temple of Jehovah, which was in a half-ruined state, was to be repaired. The king decreed that certain taxes and offerings should be set aside for this purpose exclusively. Years went by, and the money rolled in, but the work was not attended to. Then the king ordered that a chest should be placed near the altar, with a hole bored in it, to receive the offerings for repairs only. So then the money was gathered and the repairs were made. The workmen proved more honest and faithful than the priests had been.

Men Who Needed No Watching, 2 Kings 12:11-15

1. "Reckoned" (15) would mean "kept no accounts." Was it just the best thing to give out the money in this way? Give a reason for your answer.

When General Wood, afterward made governor of the Philippine Islands, was filling a similar office in Santiago, Cuba, one of his lieutenants said of him: "I never knew a purer man in deed and thought. Not one of the Rough Riders but was better for association with him. His moral influence upon them was tremendous. His great soul, his repose of manner, his personal dignity, compelled respect and obedience."—*Dunning.*

Study XIII.—Judah: From Rehoboam to Ahaz

Fifth Day: A King Who Became a Leper

Azariah, or Uzziah, ruled long and successfully, having great ability and energy. It was a time of peace throughout Palestine and of domestic prosperity and the extension of borders. Uzziah was a good deal of a warrior. He equipped his soldiers with coats of mail, and bows and slings. Also he "made in Jerusalem skilfully invented machines, which were set upon the towers and battlements, with which to shoot arrows and great stones." Moreover, Uzziah was a lover of the arts of peace. He "built towers in the wilderness, and hewed out many cisterns for the storage of water; for he had many herds in the lowlands, and farmers in the plains, and vine-dressers in the mountains, and fruitful fields; for he loved agriculture (2 Chron. 26:10, 13-15). The end of this great reign was misery for the king, because he fell a victim to the terrible disease of leprosy, and spent his last years in a "separate house." The writer of the book of Kings says, "Jehovah smote him." The Chronicler states further the circumstances under which he was smitten, teaching his readers respect for the office of priest (compare 1 Sam. 13:9).

The End of a King's Success, 2 Chron. 26:15b-21

1. Why was there peace in Judah during this reign (Study XII, fourth day)?
2. What was the source of the king's strength and fame (15)?
3. What was the influence of this fame upon himself? Schoolboys have a very expressive term for such a state of mind.

Did you ever hear of a man who had striven all his life faithfully and singly toward an object and in no measure obtained it? If a man constantly aspires, is he not elevated? Did ever a man try heroism, magnanimity, truth, sincerity, and find that there was no advantage in them—that it was a vain endeavor?—*Thoreau.*

Study XIII.—Judah: From Rehoboam to Ahaz

Sixth Day: Two Young Men at a National Crisis

The crash in which Israel fell would doubtless have involved Judah also, but for the great services of a young man of princely rank named Isaiah. The Monster of the East, Assyria, had seemed to be very feeble during the prosperous days of Jeroboam II of Israel, and Uzziah of Judah. Consequently, a strong anti-Assyrian party grew up in the small countries of Palestine, which kept asking, "Why should we go on paying tribute to this weak and almost helpless master? Let us throw off the yoke!" A critical year came—the year 735 B.C. Syria formed an international league of rebellion. Israel and Philistia joined; Judah held aloof: Ahaz had just come to the throne. Public opinion was divided as to the best policy to pursue. Some desired an alliance with Egypt. Others thought that Assyria still held out the surest protection. Meanwhile, the allies set out to invade Judah and get either her help or her treasure. News came to Jerusalem that they were on the march. The "king's heart trembled, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest tremble with the wind." One day when he was hurrying the completion of the defences of the capital, young Isaiah came to him and advised him not to fear the invasion; for his enemies were only "stumps of smoking torches" that would soon burn out. Neither need he seek an alliance for protection. "Jehovah of Hosts will come down and fight upon Mount Zion. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 31:4 and 30:15).

The Prophet and the King, Isa. 7:3-7

1. What was the object of Isaiah's errand to Ahaz?
2. How does the incident prove the young prophet's interest in public affairs?

I like the man who faces what he must,
With step triumphant and a heart of cheer;
Who fights the daily battle without fear;
Sees his hopes fail, yet keeps unfaltering trust
That God is God; that somehow, true and just,
His plans work out for mortals.

—*Selected.*

Study XIII.—Judah: From Rehoboam to Ahaz

Seventh Day: Judah's Deliverance;—into Slavery

The allied invaders laid siege to Jerusalem. The whole land outside the city fell into their merciless hands. Judah was "brought low and made naked." When the siege began, the "trembling" of Ahaz turned to panic. He threw aside Isaiah's advice; of what practical use was this talk of the deliverance by Jehovah when it was a case for nations to deal with according to the dictates of policy and advantage? He sent to Tiglath-Pileser, King of Assyria, for aid. This was the slavish message: "I am your servant and your son; come and deliver me." A present of gold and silver went with the message, and doubtless helped to start the king on his campaign. Deliverance came for Judah; and the Assyrian took ample vengeance upon the allied rebels from his authority. When the humbled vassals were summoned to Damascus to arrange terms of tribute with their conqueror, Ahaz was there with the rest. He was finding out the cost of the services rendered him.

The wisdom of Isaiah's advice was fully approved by events. His idea was that, although Assyria might help Judah for a time by devouring Damascus and Samaria, Jerusalem's turn to be eaten up would surely come in time.

A Change of Altars, 2 Kings 16:10-14

1. How did Ahaz reason about this matter (2 Chron. 28:23)?
2. Is there any evidence that the priest disapproved of this act?

Secret places, closets, altars, help concentration of attention by shutting out the world; but a man may pray as devoutly on the streets of a great city as in the silence of a cathedral.—*Lyman Abbott.*

Study XIV.—The Decline of Judah

Study XIV.—The Decline of Judah

First Day: The Prophecies of Micah, the Peasant

God gave His wisdom to a shepherd, Amos; to a prince, Isaiah; and to a peasant, Micah. He is no regarder of the parts that men play in life. The peasant, Micah, saw the corruptness of Judah from a different standpoint from that of Isaiah. He, the peasant, saw rich men seizing fields to make their great estates, and taking away the inheritance of the poor (Micah 2:2). He compares them to cannibals, who "eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and chop them in pieces as for the pot" (3:3). The social evils are widespread.

In this state of things, Micah cries: "As for me, I will look to Jehovah" (7:7). God pleads with His people: "O my people, what have I done against thee? Did I not redeem thee out of bondage? O my people, remember" (6:3). What doth Jehovah require but justice and kindness between man and man; and humble trust toward Him (6:8)? But they will not hear; therefore, vengeance is on the way; Jehovah will not always plead. He will "execute vengeance and wrath on the nation that hearkeneth not; I will make thee desolate because of thy sins" (6:13). But after exile and discipline the remnant shall return, and Jehovah shall reign over them from Mount Zion forever (4:7). "He will tread our iniquities under foot, and cast our sins into the depths of the sea."

MICAH'S VISION OF THE END OF WAR; THE COMING OF MESSIAH, 4:1-4 and 5:2, 4

1. Has war a place in the Christian ideal?
2. Memory verse, last part of 4:3.
3. Was Micah a fighter? Browning says of himself, "I was ever a fighter." Can you imagine circumstances under which it is necessary to fight in order to have peace?

Where thou findest Ignorance, Stupidity, Brute-mindedness—attack it, I say; smite it wisely, unweariedly, and rest not while thou livest and it lives; but smite, smite, in the name of God! The highest God, as I understand it, does audibly so command thee.—*Carlyle.*

Study XIV.—The Decline of Judah

Second Day: Isaiah, the Prince of Prophets

Isaiah is called the prince of prophets. The title is just, because his prophecies are the noblest and most elevated that have come down to us in the Hebrew literature. When we read them, written as they are "in strokes of flame," it must be remembered that they were first spoken; hence they are best appreciated if read aloud. Here was a statesman-prophet, a seer, a poet, an orator. For forty years he addressed his counsels to kings and people, particularly to the upper classes of society. It was due to his influence and that of his friends, who formed a community to carry out his ideas, and also such other men as the peasant-prophet Micah, that Judah's life was preserved for another century after Israel fell.

His words were like red-hot iron, as he scored the social abuses of the nation. The prophecies of Isaiah and Micah are strikingly similar, considering that they viewed the situation from the extremes of social position.

Isaiah had no more patience than Amos had with the combination of worship and wickedness. These great seers of Judah felt the supremacy and majesty of Jehovah as the only God. They first declared the gods of the nation were only idols. Jehovah, the only God, ruled all nations, and would raise them up or put them down as suited His purposes. The majesty of Jehovah was seen by Isaiah with wonderful power, and depicted in burning words. The great Day of God would come when the pretensions of proud men would crumble, and when Jehovah should arise and shake mightily the earth, and men would crawl into caves and holes of the earth to escape from His vengeance.

The Call of the Prophet, Isa. 6:1-8

1. Does a call to any work for God usually fall in with one's inclinations (Isa. 6:5, Jer. 1:6, Ex. 3:11)?
2. Should one think in advance of the consequences of bearing testimony for Christ (Ex. 4:1)?

Dare you be Christ's disciple? Dare you follow the courageous impulse of the heart which makes you feel the world well lost for Christ? It is the very glory and quality of youth to be courageous. It is youth that defies the deadly hail of battle; it is youth that defies the tyranny of custom and the hatred of the world.—*Dawson.*

Study XIV.—The Decline of Judah

Third Day: Judah and Her Powerful Neighbors

Think what bondage to a foreign power meant. It meant annual tribute of many thousands of dollars. Tribute meant taxes. Taxes meant a killing burden on a little country made poor by wars. Hezekiah inherited this burden. Naturally, his subjects were always looking out for a chance to shake it off. If Assyria should die, they would be free. Sometimes Assyria looked very ill. For example, in about 710 B.C., in the reign of Hezekiah, Babylonia revolted, and Assyria was hard pressed. Philistia, Judah's neighbor, stopped paying tribute. Egypt sent messengers to say that it would be cheaper to creep under her wing. Judah was getting all ready to say "no" to Assyria's yearly collectors. Then Isaiah walked the streets almost naked, like a captive: "This is the way it will be with Judah if she listens to Egypt. You cannot succeed; be quiet; wait; God will send help." Just then, with a crash, down went the Babylonian revolt. Out flew the great whip of Assyria; her immense army was on the march westward. Back hurried the Judahites to get their money ready for the collectors, bowing, and saying "your most obedient servants"!

But when Assyria had a change of rulers in 705 B.C., Isaiah's warnings were thrown away; the Egyptian party was too strong. The Assyrian tribute was refused. There was a pause. It looked like success this time. Isaiah pictures the short-lived rejoicings in Jerusalem (ch. 22), "a joyous city, full of shoutings." Then, out came the army from the East; down went city after city. See the results for Hezekiah and Jerusalem!

Increase of Burdens, 2 Kings 18:13-16

1. Estimate the amount of this tribute.
2. Do we learn most readily by counsel or by experience?
3. What had been Isaiah's counsel?

Know thou, my heart, if thou art not happy to-day thou shalt never be happy. To-day it is given thee to be patient, unselfish, purposeful; to be strong, eager, and to work mightily! If thou doest these things, and doest them with a grateful heart, thou shalt be as happy as it is given man to be on earth.—*Havergal*.

Study XIV.—The Decline of Judah

Fourth Day: The Deliverance of Jerusalem

Many times had Isaiah given his earnest advice to the king to wait in quiet for Jehovah's deliverance. Once, at least, was he obeyed.

After Sennacherib had taken the enormous tribute from Hezekiah and gone on his way against the cities of Philistia and Egypt, he seems to have changed his mind about leaving so great a stronghold as Jerusalem in his rear. He sent a messenger with an imposing escort to demand its surrender. When Rabshekah appeared before the walls, picture the scene, as his trumpets blew; the people crowding the walls and the housetops, trembling with apprehension at sight of those dreaded and merciless soldiers of the East. The representatives of King Hezekiah came in state to receive the message. It is given with brutal directness. "Surrender! Would you hesitate? You cannot mount two thousand men. What has happened to other petty states who have trusted their gods? Will you trust Jehovah? You will fall as others have fallen before the mighty conqueror, Sennacherib." The good king waits in suspense. The message is reported to him. Alone he goes into the house of Jehovah. There he repeats it, and appeals for Divine help. The facts are brought to Isaiah. He does not tremble. He reminds the king of the counsel of trust he has always preached. "Tell them the daughter of Jerusalem is wagging her head at the mighty conqueror. O king, do not fear these proud words. Jehovah will put a ring in the nose of this blasphemer, and lead him back to his place. He shall not shoot an arrow into this city."

The Departure of Sennacherib, 2 Kings 19:35-37

1. What do you imagine it was that happened to the Assyrians?
2. Psalm 46 is believed to celebrate this deliverance.

"A poor Baptist pastor of Germany was once forbidden to hold religious meetings by the Burgomaster of Hamburg. 'Do you see that little finger?' said the Burgomaster. 'As long as I can move that finger, so long will I put down the Baptists.' 'Yes,' said the brave pastor, 'I see your little finger, and I see the great arm of God also, and while that arm is lifted on our behalf, your little finger will have no terror for us.' "

Study XIV.—The Decline of Judah

Fifth Day: Hezekiah's Reform by Proclamation

Micah, the peasant-prophet, had been pounding away at the wrong things in society,—the greed, injustice, immorality, legal robberies, and shallow religion of his time. Isaiah had been preaching the same things in the ears of kings and nobles. This earnest work had its fruit. Isaiah had a group of men who practiced his teachings, and were an element of uplift in the nation. The king was hard beset by conflicting parties, but Isaiah's predictions had come true in such a remarkable way that Hezekiah set about making certain reforms of the popular worship of Jehovah. He sent out through the towns and destroyed altars and "high places" where people worshipped, and also the brazen serpent—a sacred thing—and cleansed the great Temple, and tried by every means to center worship there. This was reform by edict. How different from what the prophets desired! Their hope for the nation was that the individual citizens would be converted to a new ideal of life. "What does Jehovah require of thee," cries Micah, "but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" The book of Jeremiah tells us that Hezekiah was directly influenced to his reforms by Micah (Jer. 26:17-19a). But such violent methods could not have met the prophets' approval. These were better days than those of the violent Elijah.

The Place of True Reform, Isa. 1:15-18

1. Recall some of the things you have seen accomplished by efforts to elevate the poor, to destroy slums, to right wrongs, to educate and reform youthful criminals, etc.
2. What gives life and permanency to all such efforts?
3. How does Isaiah say one must use one's will in order to have God's approval?
4. What is God's promise?

The Psalmist did not merely look back and say, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee and thou forgavest my iniquity"; he also looked ahead and said, "I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way."—*Maltbie D. Babcock.*

Study XIV.—The Decline of Judah

Sixth Day: The Common People

Look at the situation in Judah during the last ten years of the reign of Hezekiah. Understand the position of the common people. Everywhere they had their shrines and altars which had been sacred for generations. In the cities the men of influence belonged to the Pro-Assyrian party, and worshipped languidly their adopted gods. On the heights of the capital stood the Temple of Jehovah, the nation's God, and to it the Nationalists resorted, almost as languid in devotion as the rest. So, in America, the national flag has the place of honor, but other flags are displayed also; the Christian religion has chief honor, but other cults are not forbidden.

Isaiah had just had a great triumph when Jerusalem was delivered from Sennacherib, exactly as he had predicted. Hezekiah was so impressed that he began reforms of worship; but Isaiah wanted reforms in individual lives. He wanted the pitiless burdens lifted from the common people; Hezekiah destroyed their shrines and altars held sacred for generations. Result: the people became resentful; they mourned for their lost altars. Unable to understand the new faith, led by false priests, when affairs in the nation grew no better, they said bitterly: These new prophets have deceived us. Our shrines are destroyed. We have nothing to take their place. Give us back the old ways. Jehovah is angry. Down with the prophets! So they misunderstood their best friends.

The Pain of Rejection, Isa. 53:3-6

1. How did Isaiah work and speak to help the condition of the poor and oppressed? Did they understand and appreciate?
2. How did Christ's work help families and individuals? Could He have been put to death if they had remembered this (Jn. 6:14)?
3. What does the true man do when his efforts to do good go unappreciated?

An arm of aid to the weak,
  A friendly hand to the friendless;
Kind words, so short to speak,
  But whose echo is endless—
The world is wide; these things are small;
They may be little, but they are all.

Study XIV.—The Decline of Judah

Seventh Day: The Blood of the Prophets

After the violent reforms of Hezekiah came the violent persecutions of Manasseh. The prophets were blamed for Hezekiah's policy. All injuries, all national humiliations, were laid at their door. In prosperity, offerings of thanksgiving were made; in misfortune, offerings to win back favor. But Judah would not "put away the evil of her doings," would not divorce wickedness from the worship. The people "perished for lack of knowledge." They listened to the smooth words of their priests and their paid prophets.

Under Manasseh all the old abuses were restored. Foreign religions were encouraged; superstitions were introduced again into the worship of Jehovah at the local sanctuaries (2 Kings 21:1-6). "Manasseh shed innocent blood very much until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another" (2 Kings 21:16). Tradition has it that Isaiah was one among those who perished. However, this dark period was the herald of a better day, that dawned in the succeeding reign of Josiah.

Heroes of Faith, Heb. 11:24-26, 32-36

1. What was the after-effect of Hezekiah's reform?
2. Who suffered most in Manasseh's persecution? Did these men give up attempts to teach?

We hear the call; in dreams no more
  In selfish ease we lie,
But girded for our Father's work,
  Go forth beneath His sky.
Where prophets' word, and martyrs' blood,
  And prayers of saints were strown;
We to their labors entering in,
  Would reap where they have sown.

—*S. Longfellow.*

Study XV.—The Babylonian Period: Fall of Judah

Study XV.—The Babylonian Period: Fall of Judah

First Day: The Great Reformation of Josiah

The period before Josiah, a half-century in which Manasseh ruled, was marked by a reaction against Jehovah-worship. The prophets were driven into hiding; the worst counsels prevailed; Right hardly dared lift her head. The prophet Zephaniah gives us glimpses of the times; a scornful atheism was common, in which people said, "Jehovah will not do good, neither will he do evil." On the dark page of Judah's decline appears the bright spot made by the reign of Josiah. The boy-king early showed his good impulses in undertaking the repair of the Temple. The first motion toward real reform probably came through the influence of Zephaniah's preaching. The Book of the Law was found in the Temple and brought to the king (2 Kings 22:8). When the requirements of the book were understood, the king rent his garments as he saw how far short the nation had come of living up to the high standard. He then set about reforming the abuses of worship. The emblems of Baal, Moloch, the Sun-god, and other heathen deities, were destroyed; also the temples that Solomon had built on Mount Olivet. The king even extended the work of reform into Israel, where Amos had preached.

When the work of reform was done, Josiah celebrated a great Passover feast, 621 B.C. Unfortunately for the permanency of his work, he mixed in foreign affairs that did not especially concern him or his kingdom, and paid the penalty of his boldness with his life (2 Kings 23:29).

Judah's One Step Too Far, 2 Kings 23:24-27

1. Is there any limit to God's mercy and His power to save the man who is lost from Him?
2. Is there a practical limit of wrong-doing, from beyond which men do not return?

After we have fallen, the tempter tells us the case is hopeless; it is of no use to try to rise; you cannot overcome your besetting sin. This is false. You may rise. Among the ranks of the blessed in heaven to-day could we not find many who were once sunk as low, or lower, than we? But they are washed, they are justified, they are sanctified through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so may we be.—*Stalker.*

Study XV.—The Babylonian Period: Fall of Judah

Second Day: Literary Work of the Prophets

The reign of Josiah has been called Judah's Indian summer. "The reformation of Josiah furnishes the best starting point for a study of the literature of the Old Testament" (Kent). From the hiding-places into which the prophets went in the persecution by Manasseh they came out afterward with the Book of the Law, the foundations of a written word of God. Into the peaceful reign of Josiah there continued from this beginning a tremendous literary activity. What was the Book of the Law? Scholars believe that we have it included in our book of Deuteronomy. "In some group of pious men, still under the inspiration of Moses, this book was compiled. It was a summing up, perhaps by priests, of all the teachings of the prophets, from the days of Moses to the solemn crisis through which Judah was now passing" (Koenig).

Two things are aimed at distinctly in this book: one, religious, to establish the worship of Jehovah in the Temple at Jerusalem, and destroy at the same time all foreign religions and all superstitious customs. Also, rules are made for tithes, feasts, sacrifices, and the duties of priests. The other aim is the regulation of morals. Here are found laws concerning warfare, land ownership, use of clean foods, chastity, treatment of servants, strangers, and neighbors. A curse is pronounced for disobedience, and a blessing for obedience. "From this beginning it is easy to understand the work of the first editors of the prophetic-historical books, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. They gathered together the narratives of the race, called attention to the rich spiritual truths contained in them, and added their own observations, which reflected the higher ideals current at this period" (Kent). Some Psalms were probably composed at this time and collections of Proverbs were made.

The Word of God Near Thee, Deut. 30:11-14

1. Is any excuse here allowed for not knowing God's law?
2. How do man's conscience and God's law work together to instruct about duty?
3. The entire passage is worth memorizing, particularly verse 14.

Sometimes we hold back from the richer Christian life because we say we have not the temperament for it, or we cannot get time for Bible study and prayer, or we have so many things to do that we cannot afford to get absorbed in these things. But these are only excuses, and they would rob us of the best and richest things of life.—*Speer.*

Study XV.—The Babylonian Period: Fall of Judah

Third Day: After Josiah,—the Deluge

When Josiah marched out to oppose the passing of the army of Pharaoh of Egypt, that monarch was on his way to get a share of the falling empire of Assyria. But Babylonia, or Chaldea, got the lion's share; and in a great battle, fought in 605 B.C., at Carchemish, Egypt was defeated. Thus Judah went over from the control of Assyria to that of Chaldea.

"The death of Josiah is unquestionably the most tragic event in Hebrew history" (Kent). "It does not seem that the results of his reformation were deep and permanent" (Ottley). As before in Hezekiah's reign, and as always and everywhere, violent methods do not seem to bring lasting reforms. In fact, Judah sank lower than ever. Those who had been "reformed" from the worship of idols returned to their former ways. Those who had followed the prophets seem to have become discouraged, and taken up with a Temple service of shallow forms and ceremonies. Jeremiah cries out, "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and seek if you can find a man, if there be any that doeth justly and seeketh truth" (Jer. 5:1). He adds: "A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule at their hands; and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof" (5:33)? Hence, Jeremiah saw on the political horizon "evil looking forth from the north, and a great destruction" (6:1). Habakkuk, in the same period, wrote a notable prophetic description of the advance of the Chaldean host (Hab. 1:6-11).

The Call of Jeremiah, Jer. 1:4-10

"Rejected and persecuted by those whom he sought to help, his life was one prolonged martyrdom, doubly painful because he was so keenly sensitive."—*Kent.*

1. How is the youth's modesty shown?
2. What assurance does God give to him?
3. Do men receive as clear calls to as high service to-day?

"Then to side with truth is noble, when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit, and 'tis prosperous to be just.
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside,
Doubting in his abject spirit till his Lord is crucified;
And the multitude make virtue of the faith they have denied."

Study XV.—The Babylonian Period: Fall of Judah

Fourth Day: Reign of Jehoiakim

Jehoiakim was an insolent product of an Oriental court. He turned his back upon the miseries of his people, taxed the land to pay the national tribute (2 Kings 23:35), and devoted his own royal ease to the building of a splendid palace out of the treasury reserve from his father's reign. Jeremiah said of him: "Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness! Thine eyes and thy heart are for thy covetousness, and for shedding innocent blood, and for oppression and violence, to do it" (Jer. 22:13, 17). This charge was not overdrawn. When a prophet named Uriah spoke against the king, and fled, Jehoiakim sent after him in pursuit, even to Egypt, and brought him back and had him killed. When Jeremiah sent the scroll containing the Divine judgment against the kingdom, and it was read to the king, he took it and cut it into strips with his penknife, and burned the strips on the brazier of coals (Jer. 36:4). Jehoiakim was killed in battle and Jehoiakin ruled in his stead.

The new king revolted from Chaldea and was carried away to Babylon in 597 B.C. At that time Nebuchadnezzar took away some thousands of the best citizens of Judah, including the young man Ezekiel, who afterward became famous as a prophet. This is called the First Captivity of Judah.

The Man Who Trusts God, Jer. 17:5-8

1. Divide this into two parts. Compare it with the first Psalm. Note the similarity and the difference.

Whether or not we can DO something for our fellow-men, it is good to know that we can BE something for them. No man of the humblest sort can really be strong, gentle, pure, and good, without the world being better for it, without somebody being helped and comforted by the very existence of that goodness.—*Brooks.*

Study XV.—The Babylonian Period: Fall of Judah

Fifth Day: The Work of Jeremiah in Jehoiakim's Reign

It is a feeble and inaccurate description of Jeremiah to call him "the weeping prophet." He did more than weep. His work extended over more than forty years, and no prophet uttered sterner denunciations, nor tenderer invitations, than he. Jeremiah's political counsel, like that of Isaiah before him, was against all alliances. "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man" (Jer. 17:5). He preached justice and the righting of wrongs (22:3). Jeremiah, naturally timid and retiring, boldly planned methods of getting his message directly into the hearing of those for whom it was intended. He stood in the Temple on days when great crowds were there, and delivered it (19:14), or when he was in prison sent it to be read by his faithful friend, Baruch. He stood in the gates of the city and denounced those who conducted their business on the Sabbath; he took the elders of Jerusalem into the Valley of Tophet and gave them an object lesson. When he repeated this in the Temple, the high priest put him into the stocks. Those who passed by mocked at him (chap. 20). His acquaintances "smote him with their tongues," and said, "Let us denounce him," although he had prayed for them that the ruin which he foresaw coming upon them might be turned aside. Well is it said, "His life was one long martyrdom."

Jeremiah Under Persecution, Jer. 20:7-13

1. What did he suffer physically (20:2)?
2. What were his mental sufferings (20:7, 10)?
3. Which was the harder to bear?
4. Why did he not cease to prophesy (20:9)?

True, 'tis a straight and stormy road,
  And mortal spirits tire and faint;
But they forget the mighty God,
  That feeds the strength of every saint.

—Watts.

Study XV.—The Babylonian Period: Fall of Judah

Sixth Day: The Last Years of Judah

When Nebuchadnezzar took away King Jehoiakin and several thousand of the best men of Judah, in 597 B.C., he left Zedekiah on the throne. This weak king was overshadowed by his nobles, who insanely advised rebellion. The atheistic leaders of the time were saying, "In the dark, 'Jehovah seeth us not; Jehovah hath forsaken his land'" (Ezek. 8:12). It was hard for the common people to distinguish between true and false prophets. Jeremiah constantly counseled submission to Babylon: "Serve Nebuchadnezzar and till your own land in peace; or rebel and be consumed" (Jer. 27:6-8, 11). On account of such advice he was called a traitor. He walked through the streets wearing a yoke on his neck and fetters on his wrists, to show how captivity was coming for Judah. Hananiah, a paid prophet, said to the people: "Do not be afraid; within two years the captives now in Babylon shall return." Then he broke the yoke that Jeremiah carried, for a symbol. Jeremiah was silenced for a time; but he returned and said that Jehovah would make the yoke on Judah's neck an iron yoke, and that Hananiah would die within a year (28:14-17).

But in spite of the prophet's protests, Zedekiah was influenced by his nobles to rebel against Babylon in 588 B.C. The inevitable invasion by the Chaldeans resulted immediately. The siege that followed lasted a year and a half, with all the usual features of misery and famine and death. Jeremiah persistently advised surrender. He was thrown into a dungeon, afterward rescued, and put under arrest in care of the royal guard. The king invited him to a secret interview; Jeremiah's advice was, surrender and save yourself, the people and the city (38:17). At last the enemy broke through the walls. The end of Judah had come. The date was 586 B.C.

God's Efforts to Save Judah, 2 Chron. 36:14-17

1. Four things are to be noted: the transgression, Jehovah's efforts, the results of them, and Jehovah's final course.

An evil life has its root in an alienated heart. God "rose up early and sent." That means earnest effort. The depths of God's heart are disclosed. He lavished benefits and pleadings for long years in vain, till He saw "there was no remedy." Behold, therefore, the "goodness and severity" of God, and learn that His purpose is the same, though His methods are opposite.—*Alex. McLaren.*

Study XV.—The Babylonian Period: Fall of Judah

Seventh Day: The Final Captivity

When the enemy entered the city on one side, the king and his guard fled on the other. But the fugitives were overtaken. After being forced to witness the death of his sons, the king's eyes were put out. The Chaldean captain of the bodyguard, Nebuzaradan, came and finished the work of destruction. The walls were razed; the Temple of Solomon and the palaces of the city were sacked and burned. Thus the predictions of the prophets were literally fulfilled (Jer. 32:29, Mic. 3:12). The poorest peasants were left to care for the vineyards and fields, while the rest were taken to Chaldea, and there the men of rank were put to death.

Jeremiah was treated with the utmost consideration. A man named Gedaliah was set up as king. He and the prophet agreed perfectly as to the policy of submission, but the king was murdered; massacres followed; and many of the remnant of the wretched population fled into Egypt. Jeremiah felt it his duty to follow them and share their exile. Tradition has it that there, "amid mournful surroundings of obstinate idolatry, his teachings spurned and misunderstood, his country waste and desolate, he met a martyr's death at the hands of his countrymen. All his predictions had been literally fulfilled. Jerusalem was a heap of ruins. Its inhabitants were castaways in a foreign land; yet it should be noted that the second book of Kings closes with a note of hope" (Ottley).

Freedom of Choice, Deut. 30:15-20

1. What is the command (16, 20)?
2. What is the alternative of obedience (17), and the consequence?
3. To this promise add Jesus' words in John 10:10b.

Sacred is the impulse of the soul to "turn unto Jehovah." Who has not felt it? You have never had a clearer consciousness of a weather-vane's swinging toward the wind, than of your own soul revolving toward God. But to "stiffen one's neck and harden one's heart" against that turning—nothing is more terrible than that.—*C. F. Goss.*

DIVISION VII

The Exile.—Study XVI

Study XVI.—The Exile and the Return

Study XVI.—The Exile and the Return

First Day: Conditions of Life

Nebuchadnezzar's ambition was to make Babylon great. He took no pride in war for its own sake, as his modest records prove. Building cities and temples, and developing the resources of his empire, furnished the work for this great ruler. His conquests were made for two ends: to get treasure, and to get workmen to carry out his building plans. The Exiles whom he took from Judea were allowed to live "by the waters of Babylon" in a considerable freedom. They had their own communities, with a measure of self-government. Rich fields for agriculture were theirs. Business pursuits were open to them; for it was a land of commerce. Here, in fact, is found the first sign of the aptitude of Jews for trade. Some attained places of honor. The narratives of Nehemiah, cupbearer to the king, prove this; the Book of Kings tells us that the captive King Jehoiakin was lifted into favor; the books of Daniel and Esther also reflect something of the fact. In a letter which Jeremiah sent to the earlier Exiles, before Jerusalem finally fell, they are advised how to conduct themselves in expectation of a long exile.

Jeremiah's Letter to the Exiles, Jer. 29: 1, 4-14

1. What practical advice about the mode of life?
2. Were they to think that God was angry with them?
3. What length of exile did Jeremiah predict, and what predictions had been made by the prophets (27:16)?
4. What promise for the future?
5. Mark and memorize 29:13.

Enjoy the blessings of this day, if God sends them; and the evils of it bear patiently and sweetly; for this day only is ours; we are dead to yesterday, and we are not yet born to the to-morrow.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

Study XVI.—The Exile and the Return

Second Day: The Faithful Remnant

The Babylonian gods had overcome the Deity who watched over Jerusalem. His sacred city and Temple lay in ruins. His worshippers had been carried to the lands of other gods, whose cities and temples, wealth and power immeasurably surpassed anything the Hebrews had ever known. Every boast of theirs was silenced. The voice of praise was hushed. No altar fire could be kindled in this land polluted by idols. Humiliation—national, religious, personal—weighed down their spirits. We cannot understand the shame that depressed them, "eating unclean food in Assyria."

The result was a sifting—such a sifting as the prophet had foreseen (Amos 9:9), in which the worthless should be shaken out, and every good kernel retained. There could be no low motive now for fidelity to God. Some took the primrose path, acknowledged the might of the Strong Gods, and sank into paganism. Some, in their despair, slipped into hopeless atheism. Some yielded to ridicule and sold their birthright, obliterating their Hebrew origin as quickly as they could. After the apostates, the worldly-minded, the cowardly, and weak had been sifted out, there remained the faithful ones. In their homesick hearts, amid the glittering enticements of Babylon, under the assaults of doubt, these heroes of faith gripped the prophets' teachings. Lacking temple, altar, priest, they bowed in submission to "wait for their God continually."

So magnificent a triumph of faith and the higher reason has never been recorded elsewhere. Here is the fruitage of the work of the prophets, from Amos to Jeremiah. The faithful remnant who emerged from this struggle held in their hands the seeds of faith that gave to us Jesus the Christ.

The Hope of the Exiles, Psalm 42

1. Mark this and the following Psalm, and the 137th, as Psalms of Exile.
2. Find and mark a verse which expresses each of the following: suffering, persecution, memory of former days, hope for the future.

"We are always in the majority when God is on our side."

Study XVI.—The Exile and the Return

Third Day: The Work of Ezekiel

One of the greatest men of the Exile was Ezekiel. He was a many-sided man. As a writer, he described the visions that God showed him in very simple words, with many repetitions (e.g., Ezek. 8:3-13); for his people were dull of understanding. He wrote a famous description of God as the Good Shepherd (34:11-16; compare John 10:11). In answer to those who accused God of injustice, in view of the nation's sufferings, he wrote a short account of the history of the nation, showing that they had always been rebellious, and had brought this misery upon themselves. Ezekiel was also a pastor; for he saw how the people struggled with doubt and how they suffered, and he became a comforter and adviser to individuals. Further, he was a talented organizer. He wrote an account of the ideal nation which he hoped Judah would some day become. In this ideal state the Temple was placed at the center of all things, and religion was the main interest of life. Some of his ideas were actually put in practice after the return to Judah.

Ezekiel thought it very important that the people should be united. This union could be based only upon common religious observances; for they had no government, and not much else in common. So they observed the Sabbath together as a holy day, and they practiced fasting in the place of sacrifices. As their sacred literature grew, they had regular readings and study of the writings of the prophets and teachers. Thus synagogues came into existence.

Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones, Ezek. 37:1-14

1. Describe what took place in the vision.
2. Explain its meaning.

Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world's famine feed;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed.

—*Bonar.*

Study XVI.—The Exile and the Return

Fourth Day: Writers of the Exile

As the Exiles had no great interest in the present, they had a great hope for the future, and a great interest in the past. They loved to think and talk about the traditions of the race, and dream and pray about a return to their Zion. They treasured every scrap of writing, both historic and prophetic. Much writing was done in this period. The work of modern scholars shows us that there were two groups of literary men. One put together, partly from records which had come down to them, the narratives of the historical books. They already had Deuteronomy from the time of Josiah. Their aim was not to get the facts only, but, even more, to use these facts to illustrate religious truths, showing how God had dealt with His people, so that when they should have their national life again they might improve on the past record. The books of Joshua and Judges are written in this spirit, as we already have seen (Study V).

The second group of writers had an especial interest in all that concerned the Temple. Perhaps these were priests. They wrote of how the sacrifices and feasts had been managed, and of how the priests had lived, and of the regulations for worship; so that when they should return again to Judah they might rebuild the Temple and know how to conduct its services in the best way. This writing is sometimes called the Priests' Code; the book of Leviticus is an example of it. The work of these two groups was combined some time before the building of the second Temple. Thus was formed the bulk of our Old Testament.

The Use of Scripture, 2 Tim. 3:14-17

1. What is the origin of inspired writing?
2. What is its value?
3. How does it prove its inspired origin (Josh. 1:8)?
4. The hope of the Exiles is beautifully expressed in Psalm 126.

Though the Bible is the book of religion of only a fourth part of the human race, yet it has swayed a greater amount of mind than any other volume the world has ever known. It has a singular faculty of attracting to itself the thinkers of the world.—*Phelps.*

Study XVI.—The Exile and the Return

Fifth Day: Cyrus the Conqueror, and the Great Unknown Prophet

Assyria gave way to Babylon; so in turn did Babylon give way to Persia. Cyrus was the hero and first ruler of the new state. By one conquest after another he rose in the space of twelve years from the rule of a little province in Elam, as an "insignificant vassal" of Babylon, to the mastery of the East. The joy of the Exiles was boundless. Their prophets had watched the conqueror's progress with eagerness, and felt sure that a great day for Israel was coming. Israel's deliverance hung upon his success. The great Unknown Prophet, whose writings are found added to those of Isaiah, as chapters 40 to 66, mentions Cyrus by name and calls him the Shepherd, and God's Anointed (Isa. 44:28 and 45:1). This writer is one of the greatest in the Old Testament, "a master of language." He works out the great idea of Israel as the servant of Jehovah, who is appointed to go through suffering in order to be the teacher of God's truth to the nations of the world. He has an intense scorn of idolatry, and draws a magnificent contrast between the images which the workman makes with his hands and then worships, and the great God who sits above the world (40:18-31), the ruler of nations (17), the maker of the stars of heaven (26), who is planning the restoration of His people (9-11).

Worship that is Pleasing to God, Isa. 58:5-11

1. How were the Jews accustomed to fast?
2. What kind of service does the prophet say God prefers?
3. What are the rewards of this kind of service?
4. Compare Matt. 25:34-36.

"Every man has experienced how feelings which end in themselves, and do not express themselves in action, leave the heart debilitated. We get feeble and sickly in character when we feel keenly and do not put into action the thing we feel."

Study XVI.—The Exile and the Return

Sixth Day: The Return of Prince Zerubbabel

One of the first acts of Cyrus as King of Persia was to issue an edict permitting the Jews to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem. We can think of several reasons why he should be willing to do this. The Jews may have helped him in his conquests; he needed a buffer against Egypt on his western frontier; he may have been shown his own name in the prophecy of the Unknown Prophet; he may have thought highly of the Jews' religion. The details of that which took place we find in the book of Ezra, a priestly book of religious history. An expedition was formed, in charge of a Persian named Sheshbazzar, in 537 B.C. A Jewish prince named Zerubbabel was in charge of the band of Exiles, which was probably not very large. Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel may be two names of the same person (Ezra 1:8; 2:2). They carried with them the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the Temple, also a great deal of money, some of which had come from the royal treasury, and much, doubtless, given by Exiles.

Arriving at Jerusalem, an altar was built on the old Temple site on Mount Moriah. Worship was begun at once, but the situation was full of discouragements. The number of higher-grade Jews who came with Zerubbabel was not sufficient to offset the weak character of the population that had been left in Judah. The traditional enemies of Israel, Ammonites and others, presented all sorts of hindrances, even active opposition. The restoration of Jerusalem under such conditions reveals to us what man's faith and energy can accomplish against heavy odds.

Invitation and Promise, Isa. 55:6-12

1. What is the invitation?
2. With what is God's "word," or promise, compared?
3. How does Nature seem to share in the joy of the return which the prophet foresees?

We need not fear for the triumph of the Kingdom of God. He will take care of that. But we may fear lest, by our own indolence, doubt, or half-heartedness, we lose our share in the glory of it.—*Selected.*

Study XVI.—The Exile and the Return

Seventh Day: The Rebuilding of the Temple; Influence of Haggai and Zechariah

Seventeen years have passed since Zerubbabel's return. So much was planned, and so little has been accomplished! Loose stones are still scattered about the Temple site. The altar stands there unsheltered.

Let us look around in that year of 520 B.C. Wretched as the situation is, better things are in prospect. The writings of a priestly prophet named Zechariah indicate this. He saw visions of a grand future for little Judah. He believed the better day was soon to dawn. Jehovah's house would be rebuilt, and the cities of Judah would be "spread abroad through prosperity" (Zech. 1:16, 17). In this time of great unrest among the nations, when the Persian power seemed to be toppling, he urges the captives who are in Babylon to flee.

Another prophet of this period was Haggai, a peasant. He stirred the people to begin work on the Temple without further delay. They have lived contentedly in ceiled houses and allowed Jehovah's house to lie in ruins. It is not right. He attributes the famine, just past, to the anger of Jehovah because of their delay to attend to the duties of religion. So, moved by this summons, the people fell to work under Zerubbabel, and laid the foundations of the Temple in 520 B.C. Four years later the work was completed, after many delays and many words of encouragement from the two faithful prophets. The Jews had a center of worship once more. This meant much as a unifying power. After the long homesickness and humiliation of exile, there was now a center for a home-community, to which faithful Jews turned their hearts from all parts of the world. In that same year, 520 B.C., Darius took the scepter of Persia and reconstructed the empire.

"Be Strong!" Hag. 2:4-9

1. How is God's power over nations pictured?
2. How does God encourage the workers?
3. From verse 4 select a sentence of four words that contains the sum of God's command and encouragement.

Fresh strength is got by every mastery of self. Every passion subdued by a higher impulse is so much character strengthened.—*F. W. Robertson.* (Read Prov. 25:28 and 16:32.)

DIVISION VIII

The Church.—Study XVII

Study XVII.—Reconstruction

Study XVII.—Reconstruction

First Day: A Voice out of the Darkness

Outside of Palestine great events were taking place in the fifty years after Zerubbabel. Marathon was fought in 490 B.C., and the East was driven back by the West. Clearly, Persia was on the decline. In Judah, the few thousands of inhabitants, on their few square miles of mountains, were silent. Their spiritual life had not been nourished by great teachers. The great lessons of faith in God that had been learned by the Exiles on the Euphrates had not yet been brought to them. They had the Temple, to be sure, but how poor compared with Solomon's! Here was the dear homeland, but how barren, how confined, compared with the days of their fathers! If God did not send prosperity to His people, perhaps, some began to whisper, it was because He had not the power. Little by little the weak and selfish and cowardly turned to the study of their own interests. Whispers of doubt grew to open scorn. Tithes were unpaid. Diseased animals were contemptuously offered for sacrifice. The priests were corrupt. The same sifting occurs here as by the waters of Babylon.

Out of the gloom is heard the voice of a prophet. There is at least one man who holds to the truth for its own sake. Malachi, the "Messenger," takes up, one by one, the hideous evils of the time, knocks away the weak excuses that support them, and drives home to the hearts of the "scorners" a piercing rebuke. Back of Malachi stand a party of faithful men who hold true to God through all misfortunes, and persecutions of their neighbors. They were such men as backed Washington in the darkest days of the American Revolution.

Two Ways of Bearing Misfortune, Mal. 3:13-18

1. Contrast the two classes and give a name to each.
2. What might have made the first class willing to turn to God?
3. Which group was more closely united?
4. Do the two exist to-day? Is it possible to distinguish?
5. When will the difference be apparent? Psalms *22*, *25*, *32*, may reflect the feelings of the righteous in this period.

> Still to employ
> The mind's brave ardor in heroic aims,
> Such as may raise us o'er the groveling herd,
> And make us shine forever—that is life.
>
> —*Thomson.*

Study XVII.—Reconstruction

Second Day: Job

Out of some such dark time as that which we have been considering came the book of Job. In form it is a drama. Job is the central character. He is a man known for his piety in heaven and earth. As he had always been prosperous, the question arises among those who have observed his uprightness, how would his character stand the test of misfortune? Satan gets permission to try him. The book deals with the question which men have always asked, Why do so many good people suffer, while so many wicked people succeed? Under Satan's agency, the blows fall upon Job one after another. First comes loss of property, then loss of family, then loss of health. His friends come to comfort him. They try to make him tell what sins he has committed, being certain that his sufferings have been sent upon him because of some guilt. Job maintains his own righteousness. To his "comforters" he says, bitterly: "Doubtless you are the people, and wisdom will die with you!" Finally, after many speeches have been made by Job and his friends, Jehovah speaks out of the whirlwind. He reproves their doubts. He asks, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" As He speaks of His power and wisdom they are silent; argument is at an end. Job learns that while there is a place for reason in the presence of mysteries, there is also a place for trust.

Carlyle says of this book, "Such living likenesses were never since drawn. A noble book! All men's book! There is nothing written, I think, of equal literary merit."

Job's Submission, Job, 42:1-6

1. After the argument, what finally puts Job to silence?
2. Read the description of the horse and the eagle (39:19-25 and 27-30).

"Here I give my all to Thee,
Friends and time and earthly store;
Soul and body Thine to be,
Wholly Thine for evermore."

Study XVII.—Reconstruction

Third Day: A Courtier's Brave Ardor

After Malachi, who had the courage to reprove popular evils, came two men, Nehemiah and Ezra, who had the power to remedy them.

A courtier of King Artaxerxes heard from some Jews who had just come from Judah that the conditions in Jerusalem "among those who had been left behind of the Captivity," were very bad, the city walls being still in ruins. He was deeply stirred. The king granted his request that he might return and raise up the city of his fathers from the dust. With a large sum of money, accompanied by a military escort, Nehemiah set out for Judah, bearing a royal commission as governor of Judah; date, 445 B.C. Arriving in Jerusalem, he found the situation even worse than reports had represented. He rode out one night, and his mule was not able to walk over the masses of rubbish. In silence he made his plans, for all around there were enemies who were suspicious, and capable of any treachery. The governor's sympathies were doubtless with the party of Malachi, but the resources for the work he wanted to do were in the control of the selfish "scorners." When his plans were completed, he called an assembly of all the people, told of the royal favor and the purpose of his visit, pointed to the desolation all around, and so filled them with his own enthusiasm that they voted to begin the work of rebuilding the walls at once (Neh. 2:18).

Nehemiah then applied his organizing talent with the utmost energy. His enemies, the Ammonites and others, ridiculed the scheme, and then made a conspiracy to stop the work by force. Nehemiah thereupon armed his workmen, and pressed the whole population into the work.

The Cup-bearer's Commission, Neh. 1:1-3, 2:1-6

1. What was the report about the conditions in Judah?
2. How did the king learn Nehemiah's desire?
3. Mention several qualities which Nehemiah showed.
4. How did he work with God from the start?

Whenever we bear a trial patiently, or encounter peril or scorn with moral courage; whenever we war against a habit or desire that is opposed to our highest principles; whenever we think, speak, or act, with a moral energy and resolute devotion to duty, then the Christ is growing up within us, and we are ascending toward God.—*Selected.*

Study XVII.—Reconstruction

Fourth Day: The Walls of Jerusalem Rebuilt

The enemies of the Jews were using every agency to oppose them: ridicule (Neh. 4:1), conspiracy (4:8), treachery and spying (6:2); but Nehemiah could neither be frightened nor deceived. The opposition was so determined, that the neighboring enemies wrote a letter to the Persian king, stating that rebellion was the object of the builders, and that if their work was allowed to continue Persia would certainly lose the province. Possibly the governor had foreseen that Artaxerxes might change his mind; and for that reason he had rushed the building operations. At any rate, before the Persian king's reply could be received the work was completed. The walls had been finished in the surprisingly short time of fifty-two days. The dedication then took place. There was great enthusiasm. The people formed into two groups and marched around the city upon the walls in opposite directions, singing as they went, and met in the forecourt of the Temple, joining in loud songs.

We now find Nehemiah making preparations to return to Persia. Possibly he had to go and answer the charges of his enemies; perhaps it was simply to fulfil the promise he had made when he first started out. Before he left he appointed two faithful men to take command during his absence. Also, because the population within the walls was very scanty, the villages were asked to supply one-tenth of their inhabitants to live within the city.

Guarding the City, Neh. 7:1-4

1. What were the qualifications of Hananiah?
2. What instructions were given about guarding against surprise?
3. What was the appearance of the city from within?

May every man serve his city with inconvenient devotion; and, even though he see no result, may he faithfully do what he can to prepare the way for the workers who will follow him.—*Maltbie D. Babcock.*

Study XVII.—Reconstruction

Fifth Day: Nehemiah's Social Reforms

Even in the midst of the building operations, the cry of distress reached the governor's ears. The poor had been so crowded by the greed of the rich that in payment for their very bread they had been compelled to mortgage their property, and even sell the labor of their children. Nehemiah was very angry. He gathered the people together and brought the facts before them. He charged the rich with greed and cruelty; they were silent, having no defence to make. He reminded them of his own kindness to the poor (Neh. 5:8, 10), and of the fact that he had taken no pay for his services as governor, because of pity for their heavy financial burdens (5:14), and urged upon them a like generosity. They promised to take no more interest on loans, and to ease the existing distress.

Other matters no less serious were taken up and dealt with in the same firm manner. There was common disregard for the Sabbath; people did their ordinary farm and vineyard work, and hucksters sold fish and provisions in the city. Nehemiah ordered the gates closed against the traders, and even threatened to "lay hands on them" (13:21) for tarrying outside the walls. He also dealt severely with those who persisted in marrying their sons and daughters to foreigners, and made them take oath that they would give up the practice. In all reforms Nehemiah had the tact to use his authority only as a last resort, depending upon hospitality, courtesy, and persuasion (5:17, 2:17, 13:17).

Regard for the Sabbath, Neh. 13:15-18

1. What practice did Nehemiah forbid?
2. What lessons did he gather from history?
3. What means did he use to correct the wrong customs?
4. When and why was the change made from the Sabbath to our Sunday?
5. How far is the Jewish law of Sabbath observance binding upon us in the observance of the Lord's Day (Ex. 20:8-11)?

A Sabbath well spent brings a week of content,
And health for the toil of to-morrow;
But a Sabbath profaned, whate'er may be gained,
Is a certain forerunner of sorrow.

—*Sir Matthew Hale.*

Study XVII.—Reconstruction

Sixth Day: Ezra and the Great Assembly

When the Temple had been rebuilt, and the Jews had once more a center of community life; when the walls had been repaired, and there was protection for the community; when social reforms had been made, and there were favorable conditions of living; then many of the Jews who had been dispersed turned again gladly to the land of their fathers. Among the groups that returned in the years immediately following Nehemiah's work, we must probably place the 1,500 men who came with Ezra, the priest. The entire company numbered in the vicinity of 7,500 persons, counting women, children, and servants.

Ezra was a learned scribe, as well as a member of the priesthood. He carried a royal commission to reform the religion of Judah. Those who came with him brought generous gifts from those who remained behind, for the uses of the Temple and the founding of a full priesthood. Of greater value, however, than any money was the Book of the Law that Ezra brought. This was the precious product of the religious writers of the Exile. It seems likely that this book contained most, if not all, of our Pentateuch, or first five books of the Bible. The exact date of this Return is hard to locate. Some recent scholars are inclined to place it after the social reforms of Nehemiah, possibly as late as 400 B.C. (Kent). Indeed, it may be that Nehemiah's influence, upon his visit in Persia, secured the coming of Ezra and his companions.

Ezra called an assembly of the people. The Book of the Law was read, and explained at great length. The people took a solemn oath to keep the Covenant. One noteworthy reform was accomplished: it was agreed that foreign marriages should be dissolved. To adjust this difficult matter a commission was appointed to look into each case by itself.

The Reading of the Law, Neh. 8:8-12

1. What was the first effect on the people of hearing the Law?
2. Compare 2 Chron. 34:19. How did the leaders wish them to mark the day?
3. What reason is there for sorrow, and what reason for gladness, when we hear the commands of God?
4. Memorize the last division of verse 10.

You mean to be religious some day. Now is the real time to open these deeper lives which you do mean some day to live.—*Brooks.*

Study XVII.—Reconstruction

Seventh Day: The Nation a Church

After Nehemiah's time, high priests governed Judah in domestic affairs. There was no political life; the interest of the people was given almost entirely to religion. Jews in all parts of the world felt that they had a share in the benefit of the Temple sacrifices. In the synagogues, which were scattered everywhere, the Law was read and explained, and prayers were offered. Priests and Levites served the Temple. They were required to be physically perfect and holy in living. The Scribes were teachers of the Law. They were, as a class, very faithful and capable, and wielded great influence over the minds of the people.

Thus began, with the reforms of Nehemiah and Ezra, that separateness of the Jews which has marked them ever since. They became indeed "a peculiar people." They were narrow, but certainly strong enough in their religious life to resist both the scattering tendency of the persecutions they were called upon to bear, and the weakening influence of luxuries. Religion became their joy and enthusiasm. They had full hopes of winning God's favor by devout lives.

The faults in this religious system are clearly seen in later times. At this point we must perceive its strong features.

Joy in God's House, Psalm 122

1. This Psalm was sung by Jews as they came from their villages to worship in the Temple. What does it express?
2. Mark the verse that you think is best, and memorize it.
3. Should joy like this characterize our Christian worship (1)?
4. The following Psalms are among those most used in Christian devotions: 1, 23, 24, 46, 51, 84, 91, 103, 121, 145.

Joy comes from doing good. Abide in Christ and bring forth fruit; then comes the joy, and you can't help yourself. Do something for somebody; comfort them, help them, and you are sure to come back happier and full of joy. Anyone can get joy in this way. "These things I have spoken unto you that your joy may be full." Find out these things, and the joy must follow.—*Drummond.*

DIVISION IX

The End of the Old Era.—Study XVIII

Study XVIII.—From Ezra to John the Baptist

Study XVIII.—From Ezra to John the Baptist

First Day: The Story of Esther

For fifty years after the Great Assembly there was comparative peace in Palestine; and during that time the Jews became closely bound together in the ties of religion. But in the breaking up of the Persian Empire, Palestine was subject to depredations of passing armies, and the Jews were robbed and persecuted on all sides. The feeling of hatred toward their enemies who oppressed them finds expression in the otherwise beautiful story of Esther. The book also seems to have been written to explain the origin of the Jewish feast of Purim. The plot is laid in the Persian capital.

When Ahasuerus, the king, wished to choose a wife, a Jew named Mordecai brought forward his beautiful niece Esther, and she was accepted as queen. Shortly after, a man named Haman was promoted by the king to high office. Mordecai alone, of all men, refused to bow down to him. This so angered the king's favorite that he secured authority to issue an edict that on a certain day there should be a massacre of all Jews; thus he thought to get revenge upon Mordecai. The latter urged Queen Esther to appeal to the king to have the wrong righted. The story reaches its climax when the king and Haman meet at Esther's banquet; and it ends as the reader would wish, in the undoing of the villain, the promotion of Mordecai to his place, and the consequent benefit to all Jews.

Esther's Responsibility, Esth. 4:13-16

1. How would Esther be involved in the threatened destruction?
2. What did Mordecai mean in 14?
3. In what words does Esther show her spirit?

True greatness is in the character, never in the circumstances. No matter about wearing a crown; make sure that you have a head worthy of wearing a crown. No matter about the purple; make sure that you have a heart worthy of the purple. No matter about a throne to sit on; make sure that your life is regal in its own intrinsic character. Then men will recognize the king in you, though you serve in the lowliest place.—*J. R. Miller.*

Study XVIII.—From Ezra to John the Baptist

Second Day: The Book of Jonah

People who wish to hold the Bible up to ridicule usually begin with Jonah. However, no one can ridicule this book who understands it. Let us see how it came to be written, and what it means. After the work of Ezra, as we have seen, the Jewish community became rigid and exclusive, trying to shut itself off from its neighbors. We have seen also how this exclusiveness bred hatred. There was a man in that time who had this high ideal for his people—that Israel was God's messenger to give divine truth to the nations. Now this man wrote a book in which Jonah stands for Israel. God had given Israel the commission to make His law known to the nations around. The messenger had shirked the duty and run away (chap. 1), but was brought back and shut up in the dark Exile (chap. 2). "I am cast out of thy sight," groaned the captive; "my soul fainted within me. I will pay that which I have vowed." Then God delivered Israel, and the messenger went on his errand (chap. 3). When people of other nations heard God's message, they heeded it, and God turned away His anger and showed mercy. Then the messenger sulked in jealousy (chap. 4). When the story is read with some such interpretation as this in mind, one will understand what Professor Cornill meant when he said:

"This apparently trivial book is one of the deepest and grandest that ever was written, and I should like to say to everyone that approaches it, 'Take off thy shoes, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' "

Running Away from Duty, Jon., chapter 1

1. Read this purely for the interest of the story.
2. Which show better qualities, the sailors or Jonah?

"So nigh is grandeur to our dust,
So near is God to man,
When Duty whispers low, THOU MUST,
The youth replies, I CAN."

Study XVIII.—From Ezra to John the Baptist

Third Day: Beginnings of Greek Influence

Alexander the Great mastered Asia in 333 B.C. He passed through Palestine to Egypt, leaving Tyre behind him in ruins, and Jerusalem unharmed. The young conqueror continued to treat the Jews with favor. The city of Alexandria, which he founded, contained a large Jewish population having special privileges. This city became the great center of commerce and culture in the East. At Alexander's death his empire was divided. Judah was included with Egypt for a century. "This was perhaps the happiest period for Judah since the loss of her independence" (Ottley). In Alexandria, Ptolemy Philadelphus, the ruler, was especially friendly to the Jews, and encouraged them, about 250 B.C., to translate the Scriptures into Greek. This they did, and the result is the Septuagint Old Testament, so called because it was said to be the work of seventy translators. This version became widely used by Jews outside of Palestine, those who are called The Dispersion.

Though the influences of this period were favorable outwardly, they were filled with danger for true religion. The Greek culture, with its easy luxury and low morals, threatened worse harm than exile. We can see the full value of Ezra's work at this point; for probably only the rigid separateness of the Jews saved the faith from corruption, when so many were yielding to Greek influences. The book of Ecclesiastes shows a low range of religious thought more or less current in this time. In it are heard the voices of faith and doubt. Its refrain is, "All is vanity."

One Man Who Had Everything He Wanted, Eccl. 2:1-11, 11:9, 12:1

1. Is everything in the world worth knowing? Is everything worth having?
2. What is this man's conclusion about these questions?
3. What is the business of a judge at the finish of a race? May "the judgment" in 11:9 be something like that?

Life comes before letters, and experience before explanation. The thing of supreme importance is to possess the facts of religion, a personal relation to God, rather than a correct philosophy about the facts. That will take care of itself.—*Maltbie D. Babcock.*

Study XVIII.—From Ezra to John the Baptist

Fourth Day: Antiochus the Persecutor

The evil effects of Greek influence were seen more and more. After a century of Greek rule, Judah came under the kings of Syria. Then they were cruelly governed. They were already hated because of the peculiar features and exclusiveness of their religion, with its high morals. They also were envied for their business success and great wealth.

Antiochus, the King of Syria, called Epiphanes, decreed that all the petty states of his realm must have a uniform religion. This meant the destruction of Judaism. To enforce the edict, his army marched into Jerusalem on the Sabbath, defiled the Temple, and forbade every Jewish religious custom. A favorite test was the eating of swine's flesh. Every Jew who refused this test was tortured and killed. Another was the offering of pagan sacrifices on their altars. One mother was compelled to see her seven sons tortured. To the seventh she said: "Fear not this executioner. Prove yourself worthy of your brothers. Accept your death" (2 Macc. 7:29). The Jews, who had almost abandoned their religion under Greek culture, now rose into heroism.

A Hero of the Faith, Dan. 6:10-18

1. Notice the openness of Daniel's action.
2. What impression had his character made on the king? How shown?

God wants to give us the joy of goodness. He will make duty so satisfying, and the right so charming to us; He will tear off the mask of every evil, that we may see it in its hideous reality, so that we, too, may say, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God!" There will be struggles and self-denials still, but we shall know what Jesus meant when He spoke of His joy.—*Trumbull.*

Study XVIII.—From Ezra to John the Baptist

Fifth Day: Daniel

The book of Daniel belongs to this period of persecution. The narratives which it contains may be based on facts in the life of this noble Exile, who, it is thought, was taken from Jerusalem to Babylon in the year 606 B.C. Perhaps no stories of the Bible are better known. Among the best of them are: Daniel's refusal of the king's dainties (Dan. 1:8-21), the interpreting of the king's dream (2:31-45), the refusal to bow before the golden image (chap. 3), the reading of the handwriting on the wall (chap. 5), the night in the den of lions. These are full of interest, and rich in their teaching of courage, and trust in God under hardship.

When one understands the times of fearful persecution in which the book was written, one may imagine the influence it had in keeping the Jews steadfast in their loyalty to God.

Young Men in Training, Dan. 1:8-16

1. What was Daniel's request, and what test did he propose?
2. Would the king's food have harmed Daniel?
3. What benefit besides the physical was he aiming for?

"Dare to be a Daniel;
Dare to stand alone;
Dare to have a purpose firm;
Dare to make it known."

It seems to you as if it would be a terrible thing to be ridiculed—terrible to have men point the finger at you and say, "There goes the Christian!" But be a Christian—have your heart full of manly love for Christ—and the terror is all gone. The only thing that will be left in the ridicule will be shame that you deserve it so little.—*Selected.*

Study XVIII.—From Ezra to John the Baptist

Sixth Day: The Revolt of the Maccabees

The thrilling story of the Maccabean revolt is contained in part in the two books of Maccabees, which are not included in the Protestant Bible.

"Mattathias [priest of Modein] had five sons, John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar, and Jonathan. Now the king's officers, who were enforcing the apostasy, came into the city of Modein, and many of Israel went over to them. Then the king's officers said to Mattathias: You are a man honored in this city; now therefore come first and do what the king commands; then you and your sons shall be honored with many gifts. But Mattathias replied with a loud voice: We will not listen to the king's words, to go aside from our worship. When he had finished, a Jew came in sight of all to sacrifice on the altar that was in Modein according to the king's command. When Mattathias saw it, he let his anger take possession of him, and he ran and slew him upon the altar. Also he killed the king's officer who was compelling men to sacrifice, and pulled down the altar. Then Mattathias cried out saying: Whoever is zealous for the Law, and will maintain the Covenant, let him follow me. And he and his sons fled to the mountains" (1 Macc., chap. 2).

"The brief period from 167 to 161 B.C. was the most active and dramatic in Israelitish history. It witnessed five great victories for the Jews. Poorly armed, ill-organized, and unaccustomed to war, the Jews faced large armies of some of the best soldiers of the age. In less than a decade Judas and his brothers transformed the weak, yielding Jews into a powerful factor in Eastern politics, and laid the foundations of the Maccabean kingdom, which, in extent and wealth, ultimately equaled that of David. Above all, they established freedom of religious worship, which the heathen never again seriously attempted to take away from the Jews" (Kent).

"I beseech you, therefore, who read this book, not to be discouraged because of the misfortunes, but to consider that these punishments were not for the destruction, but for the training of our race. The Sovereign Lord never withdraws his mercy from us; though he disciplines with misfortunes, he does not forsake his own people" (2 Macc., chap. 6).

We should all be heroic if our trials were on a grand scale! Should we? Heroism in the least is the only pledge of heroism in the greatest.—*Maltbie D. Babcock.*

Study XVIII.—From Ezra to John the Baptist

Seventh Day: The Last of the Prophets

Rome took an active hand in the affairs of Palestine in 64 B.C., when Pompey entered Damascus. Jerusalem resisted the Romans, was besieged, and captured on a Sabbath day in 63 B.C. Twelve thousand Jews were killed. Pompey refrained from pillaging the Temple, but he entered the Holy of Holies.

Herod the Great ruled Palestine from 37 to 4 B.C. In 20 B.C. he began the rebuilding of the Temple on a magnificent scale. He was a terribly wicked man, but the country flourished materially during his reign. When Herod died, his kingdom was divided among his sons.

A few months before Herod's death, occurred the birth of the king long foretold in Hebrew prophecy. It was the "fullness of time." All the world spoke one language—Greek; all the world was at peace under Rome; all the world felt that the end of the era was near. The world seemed to have failed; the Infinite must cause a new birth of Truth.

At this juncture came the last of the line of Hebrew prophets, and the greatest in point of privilege, to prepare the Jews for the early appearance of the Messiah. In the spirit and power of Elijah, John demanded righteousness in individuals, the confession of sin, the righting of wrongs. The proud were to be humbled, and the lowly exalted. Here spoke the last prophet of the Old Covenant, and then began the reign of the Christ, the mediator of the New Covenant, whose kingdom is to be without end.

Prophecy of John's Work, Mal. 4:5, 6; and
John's Preaching, Lu. 3:15-17; and
Jesus' Opinion of John, Lu. 7:24-28

1. How did John resemble Elijah?
2. What did he require of the people?
3. What qualities in John did Jesus praise?

Read Phil. 2:5-11.

The man who will sit down for twenty minutes in his room and look at the character of Jesus Christ, feels his longest life not long enough—nay, that eternity itself is not long enough—to approach the surpassing and infinite glory of that figure. Then a new sensation comes. He rises, and—what? He is hungry and thirsty to live like that; to have in himself the mind which was in Christ Jesus.—*Drummond.*

FROM ABRAHAM TO THE DIVISION OF SOLOMON'S KINGDOM

Approximate Dates	Men and Events
2200	Abraham: Emigration from Chaldea to Canaan (Period of Hebrew Pastoral Life about 500 years)
1700	Migration of the Hebrews into Egypt
1275	Rameses II, Pharaoh of the Oppression
1208	Merenptah, Pharaoh of the Exodus (Period of Hebrews in Egypt about 500 years)
1200	Moses: Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt
1160	Joshua: Conquest of Canaan (Period of the Judges about 130 years)
1030	Saul: Beginning of the Kingdom
1020	David
980	Solomon
940	Division of the Kingdom (Period of the United Monarchy 90 years)

EVENTS AND APPROXIMATE DATES IN ISRAEL

The Division, 937 B.C.	Division of the kingdom	Israel	
	Date	Kings	Prophets
Pre-Assyrian Period	940 B.C.	Jeroboam	Ahijah
	860	Ahab	Elijah
Assyrian Period (Tribute, 842)	840	Jehu	Elisha
	760	Jeroboam II.	Amos
End of Israel, 721	721	Capture of Samaria by Sargon	

EVENTS AND APPROXIMATE DATES IN JUDAH

	Judah		Division of the kingdom
The Division, 937 B.C.	Kings	Prophets	Date
Pre-Assyrian Period	Rehoboam		940 B.C.
	Jehoshaphat		860
Assyrian Period	Joash		840
	Azariah		760
(End of Israel)	Ahaz	Isaiah	721
	Hezekiah		
		Micah	700
	Manasseh	Isaiah	660
	Josiah	Jeremiah	621
Babylonian Period	Jehoiakim		
	Jehoiakin		
End of Judah, 586	Zedekiah	Jeremiah	586

Capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar

The Exile

THE DIVIDED KINGDOM

	JUDAH			ISRAEL	
	Kings	Prophets	Date	Kings	Prophets
Pre-Assyrian Period					
Assyrian Period					
Babylonian Period					

This diagram may be filled out by the student. Compare the diagrams on pages 147 and 148.

FROM THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

Dates	Men and Events
586 to 536	The Exile: Writings of Ezekiel and the "Unknown Prophet"
538	Fall of Babylon: Cyrus, the first King of Persia
536	Edict of Cyrus: Return of Zerubbabel with a band of Exiles to Judah
520	Foundations of the Temple laid by Zerubbabel: Work of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah
520	Darius, King of Persia
516	Dedication of the Temple
490	Battle of Marathon
464 (?)	"Malachi"
444	Nehemiah: Walls of Jerusalem rebuilt
432	Second Visit of Nehemiah
425 (?)	Ezra: The Great Assembly: The Book of the Law
333	Alexander the Great: Invasion of Syria
175	Antiochus Epiphanes, Tyrant of Syria
166	Judas Maccabeus: The Jewish struggle for liberty
63	Pompey: Jerusalem captured: Roman rule
40	Herod, "King of the Jews"
4	Birth of John the Baptist and of Jesus

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